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THROUGH SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

OR

THE OLD THEOLOGY AND THE NEW

WITHDRAWN

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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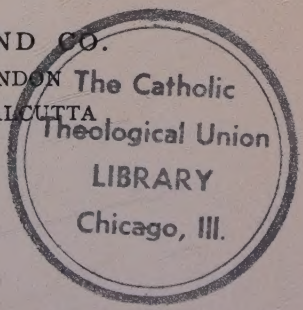

"And now the time in special is, by privilege to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of Janus with his two controversal faces might now not unsignificantly be set open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing."

"For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power."

Milton.

condemns or acquits. Higher than the highest official tribunal, its silent approval should be our greatest ambition, its silent censure our deepest dread. To wish to justify ourselves at its bar is no weakness; to fear its censure, no dishonour. For in it we recognise the highest expression of the Divine within us—of our better self, of our conscience.

To be heard by this silent few, it is unfortunately necessary to be overheard by the loud multitude through which they are scattered at wide intervals. One may regret such publicity, but one cannot avoid it. Auricular confession is not possible, and the bystanders may suffer in consequence.

One may then laudably desire not to be counted a fool by wise men, nor a knave by good men, nor a fanatic by sober men. One may desire to show that the cause for which he has lived and laboured all the best years of his life, is not so preposterous, intellectually and morally, as of late it has been made to appear by its noisier and more aggressive representatives; that he has never been duped by the sophistries and puerilities of its approved controversialists, but has rested on graver and worthier reasons, however ill-defined and ill-expressed; that even if his defence of it should have failed, he has not failed in courage or candour or sincerity; nor has he ever wittingly lent himself to the defence of folly or imposture.

True, it has been, in all ages, a task of no little subtlety and patience, this ever renewed effort (as it must seem to many) to stretch the lion's skin of the ideal over the rough-coated homeliness of the actual, and to have one's attempts frustrated time after time

by some loud-mouthed betrayal. But subtlety is not necessarily deceit, unless artist, poet, and prophet are deceivers in their endeavour to read the deeper truth that lies, in crude embryo, beneath the dulness and uncouthness of everyday appearances.

If with this volume, as far as apologetic and defence are concerned, I throw down my cards on the table, it is not because I believe the game quite desperate, or the hand quite impossible, but rather in the hope that, hereafter, should reason and sobriety become audible once more, some more skilful player may perhaps take them up and turn them to better account. Nor again, is it that self-respect plainly forbids one to repeat the offer of gifts and services that are flung back in his face, time after time. *Scio cui servio*—I know whom I am serving; nor do I mistake the man for the master. It is simply that the task has grown beyond my tastes and my powers; and needs stronger and rougher handling. I am no surgeon, and where surgery is inevitable homœopathy is mere idling.

How far I have read, or misread, the corporate mind of the Church; how far I have rightly, or wrongly, anticipated the line of its future developments, the Church alone can tell as time goes on. As for my conformity with the official interpreters of that corporate mind, which for them, as for me, is the supreme rule of Catholic faith, it is twofold—outward and inward. Outward, so far as obedience can be stretched without insincerity or untruthfulness, or that mendacious silence which is constructive untruthfulness. Inward, so far as it does not involve a sacrifice of the only interpretation of Catholicism, which enables me

personally, and many others, to regard the said officials as having any claim whatsoever to our deference. Of unconditioned obedience to an avowedly conditioned authority, the Catholic religion knows nothing, whatever the obsequious courtiers of absolutism may contend. As M. George Fonsegrive has recently said:

"Aussi loin qu'on voudra pousser notre obédience légitime, on nous trouvera dociles. Comme tous ceux qui voudraient imposer une autorité qu'ils n'ont pas nous trouveraient fiers.

"Nous ne sommes pas de ceux qui se courbent pour mieux dominer.

"Nous sommes de ceux qui se redressent pour mieux servir."

G. TYRRELL.

GREAT WARLEY, *May*, 1907.

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SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IT is with a certain sense of shame that I venture to put forward these somewhat arid disquisitions at a time when the world is flooded, as perhaps never before, with theological literature, and when the ears of the anxious inquirer are bewildered by a thousand conflicting cries of "Lo! here," and "Lo! there." If, however, I have been once more beguiled into the dusty arena of apologetic and controversy, if my interest in the contest has led me once more to abandon the serener part of a quiet spectator, it has been solely in the cause of quiet and serenity, and from the feeling that no honest effort to quell the confusion should be neglected through fear of adding to it. To suppose one could put an "End to Controversy" were indeed a fond and foolish notion, for the thing is not only impossible, but undesirable. Controversy in some sense is the indispensable condition of our progress in the apprehension of truth.

Truth being inexhaustible, controversies must be eternal. But they differ in kind, and the range between

the highest and the lowest is as that between heaven and hell; between the formal courtesy of a duel and the brawling of savages. To end such a brawl or scrimmage is not to end, but rather to forward a controversy. It is to call the combatants to order; to remind them of the point at issue; to insist on the rules of the game. Such intervention is in the interests of peace, not of strife; for the antagonism between peace and controversy, however usual, is not necessary. One need not be so sanguine as to suppose that his voice will be heard in the din, or that if heard it will or ought to be attended to. He may only feel that having once said his say, were it only to vacancy, he is free to indulge his bent and resume his seat with the sense of having done what he could, and so won his right to be a spectator of the doings of others.

The controversy dealt with in these pages is one of those which reach their acutest stage in the Roman communion, just because the principles engaged have been at work there for a much longer time and on a much wider scale than elsewhere, and have consequently been developed to their extremest conclusions by the great logic-mill of life. Yet there is no Christian communion that in taking over some portion, however small, of Catholic doctrine, has not thereby committed itself to the same conceptions of theology and revelation, and of their relations one to another. If less extensively and less pressingly, yet all are to some degree encumbered by the same difficulties, and must, sooner or later, be forced to a similar criticism of traditional assumptions. Hence these essays are of much more than domestic interest. Were it not so

they would never have been gathered together in this form. For, indeed, I cannot expect that they will be very welcome to those of my own communion who, ignoring the existence of the problem to which they are addressed, will regard my efforts as idle and uncalled for, if not as wantonly mischievous. In the eyes of such, the so-called "liberal" Catholic is one who goes forth like a schoolboy with his catapult to break and slay for the mere pleasure of breaking and slaying —one to whom peace and security are a burden. They will draw up a catena of his novelties and rash utterances and set them in sharp contrast over against established utterances, so as to impress the uninstructed many with a sense of his enormities; but of the sincerity and loyalty of his intentions, of the difficulties which have forced him, all reluctant and kicking, from his earlier and more comfortable to his later and less comfortable positions, never a word. For, indeed, the confusion and disorder of those who march in the van must often seem mere petulance and mutiny to those in the rear, from whose sight the danger that threatens the flank is as yet hidden. It would then be unreasonable to expect my work to be anything but unacceptable to those who do not believe in the proximity of a deluge or the necessity of an ark. I address myself, therefore, to those who believe in both, for the simple reason that they are already afloat.

What I have here put together might be described as the history of a religious, or rather of a philosophical, opinion. For an opinion it is, and nothing more. I am much more certain that some other opinions are wrong than that this is right; and if anyone will show

me a better, he shall be numbered among my benefactors. Indeed, my principal motive in putting it forward at all, is that someone may take it up, criticise it and improve on it. For my method, I have simply arranged the essays in their logical, which almost coincides with their chronological, order, and have prefixed to each such brief explanations and corrections as seemed necessary and sufficient to bring it into harmony with the rest. By this means the process through which I have reached my present position will appear as a wavering, rather than as a straight line—a result that should greatly facilitate the critic's task. For he will see me labouring tediously to my conclusion through a series of blunderings and amendments; not leaping to it intuitively with the perplexing rapidity of a conjurer.

To many, the conclusion in question will at first sight seem entirely reactionary. For it is a return to the earlier and stricter view as to the unchanging, unprogressive character of the apostolic revelation. It is a repudiation of all attempts to mitigate the supposed difficulties of this severer view by theories of development, dialectical or otherwise. It insists rigorously on the theological contention that the dogmatic decisions of the universal Church do not in any way add to or amplify the revelation which it is their purpose but to safeguard and reassert; that, whatever be true of the natural light of reason or of theological science, the supernatural Light of the World does not shine more brightly on us to-day than on the earliest Christian generations. Understanding by "dogma" a religious truth imposed authoritatively as the Word of God, not

as a conclusion of theological reflection, it rejects the very notion of the development, and still more of the multiplication of dogmas, and acquiesces cordially in the patristic identification of novelty and heresy.

May not such apparent reaction, however, be sometimes a necessary step in a process of evolution? When we make hypotheses that eventually break down, are we not constrained for the moment to return to our point of departure?

In view of the seemingly manifest difference between later and earlier Christian beliefs and institutions, it was necessary to uphold the sacred principle of apostolicity and antiquity by such hypotheses as the "disciplina arcani," or that of "sameness in variety," as expounded by Vincent of Lerins and by the schoolmen, and in these latter days by Newman and others. The need of such expedients was not felt in earlier days when the differences in question were less marked, or in later days when they were concealed through historical ignorance and it was possible for the imagination to push back full-blown Catholicism into the apostolic age. But as the history of the origins and progress of Christianity became better known, the need of such explanations grew more pressing; and now that the insufficiencies of the first attempts have been finally proved, we find ourselves to-day seeking refuge in various developments of the development theory. "In days within my memory," wrote Gladstone ("The Vatican Decrees," 1874), "the constant, favourite, and imposing argument of Roman controversialists was the unbroken and absolute identity in belief of the Roman Church from the days of our Saviour until now. No one, who has at all followed the

course of this literature during the last forty years, can fail to be sensible of the change in its present tenour. More and more have the assertions of continuous uniformity of doctrine receded into scarcely penetrable shadow. More and more have another series of assertions, of a living authority, ever ready to open, adapt, and shape Christian doctrine according to the times, taken their place."

These more recent hypotheses have been viewed with keen distrust by conservative theologians, both inside and outside the Roman Church. It is felt instinctively that they are at bottom revolutionary; that they do not deepen and explain, but rather explain away the traditional notion of apostolicity as the criterion of revealed truth; that they are conservative in sound rather than in sense. With this sort of objection I am fully in sympathy. In the main, conservative positions are the spontaneous product of life and experience, and their very irrationalities and incoherencies are due to the fact that it is impossible to formulate life with any sort of logical adequacy. Reflex theories framed in the interests of such logical adequacy are necessarily somewhat abstract, and involve the neglect of inconvenient and irreducible tracts of experience. They often miss the deeper reason that is covered by superficial unreasonableness, and when the clearer view is put to the test of life its poverty becomes apparent, and forces us to confess that "the old is better." Hence, if this new development theory does not save all the true values of the ancient conception of the unity and immutability of the faith, one or the other should be frankly abandoned, nor should we carry on a new business under the old sign.

Yet that, in spite of their instinctive reluctance, the conservative theologians have yielded themselves more and more passively to the force of this new current is, I believe, due to the fact that they themselves are the inheritors of mistaken concessions of principle derived from the "liberalisings" of a bygone day, but now hallowed by a sort of prescription. And if this be so, remedy must be sought in going back still further to the point of the original deviation; behind the schoolmen; behind perhaps Vincent of Lerins; though it cannot be denied that the more ancient view has lived on, even to our own days, concurrently and inconsistently with these theories of dogmatic development.

Accepting the apostolic revelation, not as an element of a collective religious experience, not as the subject-matter of theological reflection, but as itself a divinely authorised, though rudimentary theological system, conservative theologians regard it as an inherent though fundamental part of the entire doctrinal system which had been deduced from it dialectically. Of this deduced development certain conclusions have from time to time received the œcumenical approbation of the Church. But these, as well as the revealed basis, are considered as organic parts of the entire theological system. And, therefore, so far as all its parts are knitted together syllogistically, those that are divinely authorised entail the acceptance of the rest under pain of constructive heresy. Moreover, since theology and all other departments of man's knowledge are (in ideal) knit into one system, the indirect authority of revelation extends beyond theology to the utmost bounds of

science and history. Given that sacred scriptures and ecclesiastical dogmas are to be taken as divinely authorising certain philosophical and scientific categories, and certain readings of history, there is no evading these claims. If any one principle or admission possesses a certain grade of authority, the whole system of its necessary antecedents and consequences possesses the same.

But putting aside the conflicts thus involved between revelation and science, there is a more serious objection on the side of Catholic tradition. As against J. S. Mill and others who deny the positive value of mere *a priori* deduction, conservative theologians rightly contend that the schoolboy who has mastered the first book of Euclid is considerably more enlightened than when he possessed the same knowledge only implicitly in the definitions and principles. Though we look at the same object, we see more with clearing glasses than without. Granted even that nothing is "of faith" to-day that was not contained implicitly in the apostolic revelation, and has not been deduced from it by a comparison of one revealed premiss with another, can it be denied, at that rate, that we who possess not the germ, but the fully expanded system, are far beyond the early Church in point of supernatural enlightenment? Is not any Roman Catholic to-day more supernaturally enlightened than St. Bernard or St. Thomas, who denied Mary's Immaculate Conception? Must we not regard the apostolic age, when all these deduced dogmas were confused and indiscernible, as one of relative darkness and chaos? Yet what would the Fathers, with their continual appeal to the tradition of the apostolic sees,

have thought of such a contention? What would St. Paul, with his belief in a proximate advent, have thought of the view that his saving doctrine was but germinal and rudimentary, and that a fuller light was reserved for long ages to come? Again, are not supernatural light and supernatural life correlative and proportionate? Do not faith and charity go hand in hand, co-factors of one grace? Yet can it be maintained that there has been a development of charity, or that its earliest manifestations were but rudimentary?

On the other hand, the hopeless antagonisms between revelation and science, entailed by the view in question, are responsible for certain modern theories of doctrinal development, which in the last resort are altogether inconsistent with the patristic conception of the "deposit of faith" and of the rights of ecclesiastical dogma, and which practically deny revelation in the ordinary sense of the word. For in assuming that we cannot be bound to the obsolete categories in which revelation and dogma were originally expressed, but only to a belief in the same realities and experiences as expressed in the categories of to-day, they must deny that the apostolic "form of sound words" is (as the Fathers taught) the highest form of dogmatic truth, and must regard it as the least perfect, because the earliest attempt to formulate the mysteries of faith. Moreover, they assume, what antiquity never dreamt of, that the realities and experiences which were the subject-matter of the apostolic revelation are still accessible to our investigation, and can serve as the criterion of our dogmatic restatements, just as the abiding phenomena of Nature can be used to test our

scientific restatements. In this view, revelation does not mean the inspired record of a past supernatural experience, but the steady continuance of that experience, ever inspiring new and more adequate expressions of itself, and rendering earlier expressions obsolete and worthless. Philosophically alluring as this notion may be, it is not a deeper and clearer explanation of the patristic notion, but another notion altogether. If the conservative idea of merely dialectical development subjects the Present to the Past to the detriment of all scientific and historical liberty, this subjects the Past to the Present, to the utter evaluation of the traditional appeal to scripture and the apostolic age.

Out of these difficulties there seems to be no issue except, perhaps, by a careful reconsideration and criticism of the engaged notions and principles—revelation, dogma, theology. Were it possible to show that underneath the obvious sense of revelational and dogmatic utterances there lay a deeper sense, a truth of an entirely different order; were it possible, in the light of the comparative study of religions and of an immensely deepened psychological insight, to give a more real and undeniable value to the notion of "prophetic truth" than I can claim to have done, then it seems to me we might perhaps be able to reconcile perfect fidelity to the ancient principles of Catholic tradition with an equal fidelity to the fullest exigencies of scientific truth and moral truthfulness; we might, once and for all, break free from that network of equivocations and insincerities, and suppressions and false suggestions in which centuries of apologetic and

controversy have entangled us—not through any constitutional untruthfulness inseparable from the very nature of religion, but through that same defective criticism of principles which in every department of thought has made the conquest of truth so arduously painful, so wholesomely humiliating.

For then, in the case of prophetic utterances, whether revelational or dogmatic, we should be able to retain "the forms of sound words," not as mere formulas, not as voided of all sense, but as expressive of a deeper and other meaning than that conveyed immediately to the common understanding. We should retain them as of their own nature immutable and irreformable; we should repudiate all demands for restatement; all suggestions of development—dialectical or otherwise. Could we regard the apostolic revelation not as a reflex, thought-out life-theory, but as the spontaneous self-expression of a profound religious experience; as a prophetic vision of the Kingdom of God directed to the orientation of the spiritual life, and enshrining a mysterious truth independent of those other truths used for its illustration; could we take the Church's teaching more strictly as simply protecting and re-asserting, but in no wise as adding to or developing revelation; could we do this, we should then certainly avoid the perplexing consequence of allowing a great supernatural advantage to later and more cultured ages over earlier and less cultured, or to the theologically wise and prudent over the rude and simple to whom the Gospel was more especially preached.

On the other hand, in claiming no more than illustrative value for the language of prophecy and revelation,

and no more than protective and reassertive value for that of ecclesiastical dogma, we should at once liberate theology and all the sciences with which it is necessarily implicated, from their baleful entanglement with another genus of knowledge altogether—from Revelation and Dogma. These would be regarded no longer as a part of theology but as its subject-matter; they would control it not as statement is controlled by statement, but as statement is controlled by fact. Thanks to such control, as well as to that exercised by the laws of reason, there could be no possible place for theological indifferentism. Truth would remain as much as ever an obligation of the intellectual conscience; unity, as much as ever the goal of intellectual effort. But no true supernatural advantage would, in defiance of the Gospel, be attached to merely intellectual enlightenment; the fullest faith would be free to the crowds, and in no sense the privilege of a theological aristocracy.

Theology could then be recognised as belonging simply to the institutional part of Christianity, and as governed by the same necessary laws of change and development and accommodation. There would be no inconvenience in allowing that its later phases may condemn the earlier to obsolescence; or that the Church of to-day is *theologically* more enlightened than that of the Apostles. No longer holding to revelation and dogma as mere theology, we could rid ourselves frankly of all those fallacious "germ-and-organism" metaphors which attempt to describe spiritual in terms of physiological development—the higher in terms of the lower. For whereas we can predict exactly that an egg will result in a chicken, or an acorn in an oak, or that a boy

will grow into a man, we can never predict how the boy will (as we say) turn out; what his experiences will be from day to day, or how he will arrange them in his mind and deal with them in his conduct; how he will build up his own mental and moral character; what heroes, what ideals or standards he will set before himself. Physically, men are of the same species; spiritually, each is a species apart. And so with the collective spirit and its developments; so with sciences and arts and institutions, and societies and religions. On their spiritual side, and so far as they are freely self-forming, their future evades all prediction, since it is not contained in or predetermined by their present. Only so far as they have also a material side which brings them under the general uniformities of nature, can we foretell certain eventualities common to their class. Spiritual development is not a process of passive unfolding, of which each step is rigorously determined by the preceding; but a process of active reconstruction, conditioned by the chance materials furnished through the quite incalculable succession of experiences. As in the interests of taste and symmetry we have to arrange and break up and rearrange the bouquet we gather in a walk by the hedgerows, so the growth of a science, or of any arrangement of gathering experience, involves periodic revolutions, changes of method, revision of categories, as steps in the very process of its development. The old is continually being swallowed up by, and forgotten in, the new. This must hold good of theology, if it is to be a true, living, and fruitful science. But it cannot possibly hold good of it, if theology is bound to unalterable revelation and dogma as to an

inherent part of itself, and not merely as to its subject-matter.

It is therefore to the careful disentanglement of revelation and theology, and to the right adjustment of their relations of mutual dependence and independence, that we may perhaps look for a deliverance from our present grievous embarrassments.

But not only will such suggestions seem intrusive and wantonly subversive to those conservative theologians who are not sensible of any such embarrassment; who, as a wit has said, are too engrossed in disputes about the papering of the attics to be aware that the basement of their house is in flames. They will seem ten times more futile to their most extreme opponents, who to a large extent share their "all or nothing" view of the situation, but decide in favour of nothing, and who are as crude in their easy pessimism as those in their supine optimism.

To such, Catholicism is as a tree that for long centuries has spread its protecting branches over the soil from which it sprung, but which now lies prostrate and uprooted, its vitality doomed to speedy exhaustion. That knaves and sophists should plead so desperate a cause, and weave specious subtleties and evasive arguments in its favour, is to them altogether accountable; but that any sane and honest man should do so, they can only explain by some blameless ignorance or some unconscious bias of the affections. "Can it be," they ask, "that an intelligent man who knows not merely this or that fragment, but *the whole* of the heavy indictment against Catholicism, both as a system on paper and as a process in history, both in theory and in practice, can

still find or wish to find a word in its favour?—can he honestly believe that he is serving the ends of truth and morality, of religion and civilisation in pleading such a cause? If he is not consciously dishonest, if he is not a frivolous paradox-monger, must we not look for some unconscious bias to account for such Quixotry? For what can be more Quixotic than to defend those who regard one's defence as a wanton attack, and who, like delirious patients, try to strangle those who would serve them? Such defenders have never been wanting to the Church, but their fate has been ever the same, and proves how little they can claim to understand or represent her. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*—the obvious, the surface, presentment of Catholicism, as accepted both by the official Church and by her enemies, is surely more reliable than the dreams of these dreamers scorned by both alike.

"Must we not (they say) seek an explanation elsewhere?"

Perhaps in that persistence of psychological habit, reinforced by the continual suggestion and auto-suggestion of religious practices and observances, which gives an artificial reality and solidity to the beliefs of our childhood, sufficient to withstand every assault of reason and to lend them the semblance of immediate intuitions?

Perhaps in an incurably falsified conscience, also the result of early education, which deprives a man of his full mental freedom and makes him turn instinctively from certain questionings as from a sin of the deepest dye?

Perhaps in that almost inevitable, often quite un-

conscious, egotism, or parochialism, or provincialism which makes it psychologically difficult, if not impossible, for vigorous and self-assertive natures not to believe their cause to be the best cause, and their country the best country, and their religion the best religion in the whole wide world?

Perhaps in the laudable tenderness and patient affection that grown men and women may feel towards the nurse of their childhood, who now sits by the ingle, aged and paralysed, blind and deaf, and tells over the old tales that thrilled their infant minds; and, forgetful of intervening years, threatens and scolds and commands, while they on their part yield her a love and reverence and service, due rather to what she has done for them in the past than to what she can do for them in the present or future?

Perhaps in the personal experience of moral and spiritual benefit mediated through the ordinances and ministrations of the Church, and uncritically viewed as proof of her supernatural character, but which are really due to the goodwill, fidelity, and moral industry of the person in question, who would have felt the same benefit in the energetic practice of any other religion; and who, inverting cause and effect, credits his moral advance to the exercise of his religious duties?

Perhaps in a similarly fallacious conviction that the Catholic Church has been in no wise the effect and product, but purely the cause, the mother and guardian of our civilisation, and that with her fall we should necessarily relapse into moral, social, and political barbarism; that she is the sole barrier against the threatening deluge of godless materialism?

Perhaps in the fact that whether as a convert to Catholicism, or as a professed apologist of its claims, one is deeply committed to it as to a thesis for which one has fought long and suffered much with a tenacity fed and strengthened by opposition, and which one could not abandon without a confession of failure such as no wise man will make even to himself?

In these and a hundred similar suppositions many will seek some explanation of the adhesion of honest men to the Catholic Church, in the face of what must seem to them an overwhelming "cumulative argument" against its claims. The problem exists only for the few non-Catholics who, being capable of appreciating that argument, are honestly convinced by it; and only in regard to the equally few Catholics of like capability and honesty who, having faced it, are not convinced by it.

Now, while I might easily demur to and discuss these contentions and explanations, I prefer to grant that they are largely just and entirely plausible; but at the same time to deny that their negative conclusion is justified. From the statement: if A is true, B is true, I may not infer, A is not true, therefore B is not true. It does not follow that because the ordinary apologetic supports break down Catholicism must fall. It may be found to have stronger and more massive pillars and buttresses than earlier apologists either needed or suspected, to which, rather than to their dialectical defences, its vitality and endurance are to be ascribed.

I propose, therefore, in the following chapter to indicate some few reasons typical of the sort which weighs with thoughtful men in favour of the Church, and makes it impossible for them to be satisfied with any poorer

and less comprehensive synthesis that evades the difficulties of Catholicism by a drastic uprooting of wheat and tares; by a reflex simplification which overlooks large tracts of inconvenient experience and ignores many of what comparative study shows us to be the essential and universal characteristics of religion, whether personal or institutional.

Truth is not simple except when the mind deals with its own creations, with forms and measures and abstractions. In regard to the concrete, the real, the living, in regard to so infinitely complex a phenomenon as the religious process, the obvious is sure to be the false. The judgment of the *orbis terrarum* is the safest as to matters of appearance, and of direct perception, but in proportion as inference and reflection are demanded we must look from the many to the few. For this reason we should be profoundly mistrustful of any reflex judgment for or against Catholicism which commends itself quickly to the multitude—of all common-sense, straightforward, rough and ready views of the matter. And therefore I do not attempt any sort of completeness or logical coherence in the following notes and suggestions. I do not pretend that any or all of them together ought to settle the question in favour of Catholicism, still less of Roman Catholicism; but only that as a fact they do settle it for many who are neither ignorant nor self-deceived as to the difficulties of their position, and who on the strength of such considerations can be satisfied with it and with no other. I would also commend them to those who dream of brand-new syntheses by which Christianity may be able to cut itself off sharp from an inconvenient past, and to start fresh

without any encumbrance of tradition. I would ask them to consider whether such an idea is not in flagrant contradiction with all we now know of the laws of life and growth; and whether in the light of such deepened knowledge we must not confess that Erasmus was profoundly right and Luther profoundly wrong, and that had the counsels of the former prevailed, the cause of religion and culture, thrown back equally by Reformation and Counter-Reformation, would have advanced incalculably further than it has at present advanced.

Nor am I in any wise moved by the knowledge that the larger and more humanistic type of Catholicism has always been represented by a feeble and oppressed minority, and branded with the disapprobation of the reigning average. The same might be said of the prophets of Israel and of the pioneers of progress in every department of human life. They do not claim to represent the average, or to speak in its name. They claim to see more deeply into the mind of the Church, to understand its implications more clearly, to foresee its future developments more distinctly and, therefore, to be not less but more loyal than the average to the Spirit of Christ, of which she is the imperfect embodiment. Deferential within the limits of conscience and sincerity to the official interpreters of her mind, they must, nevertheless, interpret such interpretations in accordance with the still higher and highest canon of Catholic truth; with the mind of Christ. It is He who sends us to them; not they who send us to Him. He is our first and our highest authority. Were they to forbid the appeal, their own dependent authority would be at an end.

CHAPTER II

REFLECTIONS ON CATHOLICISM

(i)

ONE of the results of the comparative study of religions has been to convince us that religion is just as necessary and universal a factor of general culture and civilisation as language is; that it is "natural" to man in just the same sense. Like language or the arts of life, in all its infinite varieties and degrees of development, it is governed by one and the same end, and by certain generally uniform characteristics and methods. Gradually the genealogical tree, in which the parentage of religions each and all may be traced, is advancing towards completion, and shows us that the religious process is but an integral part of the great historical process of human civilisation and development.

This conception confirms rather than denies the Catholic tenet of the Logos, which gives light to every man coming into this world, not one of whom is left without sufficient means of salvation. And since that Light, at once transcendent and immanent, at once above and within Nature, guides all men to one and the same supernatural end, it is plain that the process is at once, and without contradiction, natural and supernatural.

As little as one civilisation is as good as another, though all civilisations aim at the utmost plenitude of life; so little is one religion as good as another, though all religions aim at the same plenitude of truth and righteousness and of communion with the Divine. They differ infinitely in their methods and in the degree of their actual attainment. Nor is it the difference between the babe, the boy, the youth, and the man; for spiritual development is not like organic development—as has been already explained. The need they would satisfy, the end they would serve is the same; but it is understood with different degrees of truth and explicitness; and the means are determined partly by chance conditions, partly by free choice.

Yet in spite of this the religious process is one; and the unity of the need and of the end on one hand, and the unity of the human spirit on the other, secure a certain uniformity characterising all religions; rendering the definition of "a religion" possible, however difficult, and making it practically easy to recognise a religion as such when we see it.

Now Catholicism with its priesthood, its sacraments, its ritual, its dogmas, its tradition, and all their uses and abuses is plainly a "natural" religion in the same sense as Judaism, Christ's own religion, was. It as plainly takes its place as a member in the universal family of religions, and presents the unmistakable family features. It is as evidently a product of the same general process by which God is bringing man into conscious relationship with Himself.

Now one of the reasons for trusting Catholicism is because it is in this sense "natural"; because it is a

growth, a part of a larger growth—*Nascitur non fit.* Its conformity to the psychological laws that govern the growth of religion everywhere proves it to be a product of those laws, which after all are God's laws. So far it is from God, and not, like thought-out systems, from man. There is a huge presumption in favour of what is "natural." Its adaptation to human nature in its entirety, to every factor of man's being, to every level of his culture, proves the Church's divinity—not as their proximity to rivers proves God's miraculous care for the needs of great cities, but as what is natural, in the adequate sense, is thereby proved to be divine. A true religion is a growth and not a manufacture. The so-called founders of new religions have one and all sprung from old religions, which they have but modified and stamped with their individuality. They have been reformers, not creators. What seems the most original and independent religious experience of the solitary mystic has invariably some historical religion behind it, of which it is the unconscious product. Our seemingly simplest ideas and words have been elaborated by generations of organised human life. Revolutions have their own place, not in organic, but in spiritual developments, and do not break continuity. As little could one man create a new religion as a new language. A Chaucer, a Shakespeare, a Dante may at most inaugurate a new philological epoch.

But the true revolution must be wholly constructive; destructive only of what is destructive. It must take up in a higher synthesis all the truth and experience of the old system. It must obey, and not defy, the natural law of its development. Else continuity is broken. For

reasons that may presently appear it seems to us Catholics that the Protestant synthesis is too crude and hasty a simplification in many ways, too artificial and reflex; that it has so far broken itself off in several respects from the natural religious process and suffered grave impoverishment.

On the other hand, what is so often used as a reproach against Catholicism—its various affinities with non-Christian religions, with Judaism, and Græco-Roman, and Egyptian paganism, and all their tributaries—seems to us one of its principal glories and commendations. We like to feel the sap of this great tree of life in our veins welling up from the hidden roots of humanity. To feel so, to possess this sense of solidarity with all the religions of the world; to acknowledge that they are all lit, however dimly, by the same Logos-light which struggles, unconquered, with even their thickest darkness —this is to be a Catholic; this is to rise above exclusiveness and sectarianism, without in any wise falling into indifferentism; this is to be His disciple Who, believing salvation to be of the Jews, found such faith in the Samaritan and the Gentile as He found not in Israel.

To have thus recognised the "natural" character of religion and of Christianity and of Catholicism is no novelty, but only an "explicitation" of the thought of the greater prophets, of Christ, of St. Paul, of Tertullian, of Origen, of Clement of Alexandria—a thought which had to struggle long with opposing tendencies, traditional opinions and sentiments that have only gradually yielded and made way for its full manifestation in these latter days.

I am not concerned to defend this conception of Catholicism as a natural and therefore a divine religion against those friends or foes of the Church who, using the term "natural" in a now unintelligible and obsolete sense, choose to stigmatise the view as rationalistic, naturalistic. I am only stating a consideration which, rightly or wrongly, weighs with certain minds in favour of Catholicism as distinguished from more artificial and reasoned-out syntheses—the products of man's freedom, rather than of God working, through the universal laws of man's nature.

(ii)

Allied with and dependent on this consideration there are others. Catholicism is characterised by a certain irrationality, incoherence, and irregularity—a certain irreducibleness to exact and systematic expression—which, far from being scandalous, is another presumption in its favour. As an illustration we might point to its Breviary or its Ritual—manifestly composite works—wrought at different times by hands guided in no two cases by quite the same ideas and principles, or by an adequate grasp of the exact meaning of preceding efforts. To criticise the result as guided by one steadfast aim and rule, to ask why this and why that, is to seek for a consistency that does not and could not exist in a product of spiritual development, whose regularity must be continually broken up by the accumulation of fresh experience, to be reconstituted by a new constructive effort. Catholicism as a religion of the people must in its growth betray the same sort of irregularities as the other co-factors of civilisation, as language or

social custom or traditional political institutions. It requires two principles for its development; one, a principle of wild luxuriance, of spontaneous expansion and variation in every direction; the other, a principle of order, restraint, and unification, in conflict with the former, often overwhelmed by its task, always more or less in arrears. The tangle and undergrowth of the forest is always more than the woodmen can cope with. The growth and fertility is not from them, but from God through Nature. They by taking thought can but secure the conditions of Nature's free play and fullest fruitfulness. By understanding and obeying her laws, Art and Cultivation can win her richer favours. Were they to fail wholly or in part, the forest would not forthwith disappear, but would at worst return to its primitive wildness. Thus its very wildnesses and barbarisms point to the natural character of Catholicism, and distinguish it from all planned-out philosophical religions, whose over-trimness is an indication of their poverty and exhaustion; for nothing that lives and grows can keep its shape long. Its durableness is therefore not dependent merely on the wisdom of its theologians, or the prudence of its officers, or this or that theory of its essence, or this or that form of its organisation. As long as a fibre of its roots remains anywhere, it is capable of renewing itself and spreading abroad over the face of the earth. It has the durability and indestructibleness of the natural as against the transitoriness of the artificial. Because it is a natural religion Catholicism is full of compromises.[1]

[1] Cf. Sir J. Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, p. 334. The Port-royalists.

In all the opposing elements of its syncretism there is a part-truth to which the religious spirit clings in spite of logic, and wisely. For a syncretism, a more or less violent forcing together of incompatibles, is the preliminary stage of an harmonious synthesis which can never be finally and fully realised just because new elements are ever coming in. Ground one against the other the fragments lose their angles in time, and approximate to coherence and continuity. Art can compel a premature and poorer unification by throwing out this or that recalcitrant member of the various antitheses; but God in Nature works slowly and surely through the unimpeded struggle of opposites.

Now it would be paradoxical to say that the greater incoherence of Catholicism were without more ado an argument in its favour; or that the mere completeness and tidiness of other systems were fatal to their claims. Nature is orderly; chaos is incoherent and not divine. But when the order is suggested by experience and waits on experience it can never be finished and logically satisfactory; when it is complete and logical it means that irreducible tracts of experience have been artificially excluded from the synthesis.

True, the Anglican reproaches Roman Catholicism precisely because of its logical and artificial unity, and uses the above argument in his own favour. But first of all, minor controversies apart, Anglicanism is far more of the Catholic than of the Protestant type, and belongs to the same tradition more or less. Secondly, the objection identifies Roman Catholicism with its present dominant theological system, or its present ecclesiastical polity. These are but examples of the

incoherence in question; parts of the whole, factors in the syncretism, elements at war with other elements; not to be thrown out but reduced and penetrated by the vital principle of Catholicism. Their persistence must be explained, their essential values must be saved, before their husks are discarded.

(iii)

Again; viewing religion as a natural process, as a factor in the general process of man's rational and spiritual development, it seems to us that in Catholic Christianity that process attains, not indeed to an impossible finality, but to a crisis that begins a new epoch. For in it the mystical process and the "moral" process (understanding "moral" widely, as including the "ought" of intellect, feeling, and will) run into one and recognise their former separateness as merely the result of imperfect enlightenment. The mystical need of conscious communion and self-adjustment with the super-sensible and superhuman world, to which the sensible and human world is felt to be subordinate, seems distinct from the "moral" need until the character of the superhuman order is realised as "moral," and till the voice of Conscience—moral, intellectual, and æsthetic—is accepted as the Voice of God. Nor till then is it felt that obedience to every sort of conscience puts man in harmony with the universe of being, and is the very essence and inwardness of religious worship and sacrifice. Of the two, the religious interpretation of "morality" is a greater gain for mankind than the "moral" interpretation of religion. It is more important that the "moral" life should gain a mystical

height and supernatural sanction as a life of union with the eternal and universal principle of all being than that the religious life should be, at once, levelled up and flattened down to the plane of "moral" symbolism. In Catholicism, Conscience—moral, intellectual, and æsthetic—is raised to the throne of God, and worshipped with all that religion has ever offered in honour of its divinities. The whole system, centred round the crucifix, invests such "morality" with the awe and reverence due to the mysterious all-pervading, all-sustaining Will of the Eternal.

Here, then, it seems to us that the rationalising anti-mystical tendencies of many other Christian bodies are impoverishing, both in their narrowed conception of morality as merely ethical, and in their reduction of religion to morality; and that they overshoot the mark in their revolt against the residues of non-ethical pagan religiousness not yet subdued in the Catholic synthesis. As for systems of independent conduct-morality they have yet to prove their ability to do what the Church has so often done on so large a scale for the masses. The ethical code she enforced was often more barbaric than Christian; yet she did enforce it, and precisely by giving a mystical and religious depth to ethical requirements, however crudely understood.

(iv)

Again; it seems to us that Catholicism is, more than other systems, a religion of the whole man, body, soul, and spirit;[1] a religion for every stage of his culture, and

[1] This conception is powerfully developed by Mr. W. J. Williams, in his volume *Newman, Pascal, and Loisy* (Griffiths), with which I find myself unreservedly in agreement.

not for one only ; for every mood of his variability, and not only for the highest ; for every sort of man, and not merely for a religious, ethical, intellectual, or social aristocracy ; that it enters as an organic part into the whole process of civilisation with its multitudinous interests ; that it makes us sensible of our solidarity with, and dependence on, the whole of humanity, past, present, and to come ; all this, of course, in virtue of principles and ideals to which it has never been wholly faithful or unfaithful, and in spite of discordant elements in the Græco-Roman paganism over which the Christian leaven can never be fully victorious.

It is a religion of the whole man. A made and thought-out religion is governed by some theoretic and abstract view of man and of the hierarchic order of his faculties and exigencies. Not so, one that is slowly being shaped by the play of man's conflicting requirements over a world-wide area. In Catholicism we find the competing claims of his intellect, his feelings, his heart, his senses asserting themselves more or less discordantly and, as it were, fighting their way towards an unattainable ideal of harmonious agreement. We find mysticism and intellectualism at war ; practical and contemplative religion looking askance at one another ; externality and inwardness contending for the mastery ; the asceticism of John despising the humaneness of Jesus. No interest of man's complex nature has been disregarded or unrepresented in deference to a forced and premature unification.

The modern psychologist, with his deepened knowledge of the sub-conscious self, of the nature and play of habit, suggestion and automatism, must confess that

instinctively and experimentally Catholicism has always acknowledged and utilised these psychological laws and principles, which thought-out syntheses were bound to ignore as long as they were unrecognised by contemporary science. Perhaps nothing is more characteristic of the difference between Catholicism and that sort of scholastic Protestantism which ripened into the cold eighteenth-century deism than the attitude of the two systems towards the sub-conscious, towards that deep and wide-spreading basis of the visible emergent peak of our clear consciousness. Both accepted the crude definition of man as "a reasoning animal," but while Protestantism applied it to the condemnation of all that was not reason, Catholic experience ignored and belied it.

Thus Catholicism has always known, not theoretically but experimentally, the use and value of suggestion and auto-suggestion in the formation of habits good or evil, religious or otherwise. It has known the need of continually building-up and perfecting a complex mechanism of habit as the condition of a fuller and more fruitful exercise of free conscious action. It has learnt the utility of certain deliberately induced narrowings and concentrations of the field of vision, and of the range of interests, without which nothing great has ever been accomplished, and to which we owe the effectiveness not only of saints and prophets, but of scholars, discoverers, heroes, and conquerors. A psychologically false spirituality, in despising these almost mechanical bases and conditions of free origination, has fallen to the ground through striving to fly without wings. Suggestion, auto-suggestion, and fixed ideas

are spiritually indifferent. They guarantee nothing for the truth or falsehood, goodness or badness, of what they impose upon us. But the True and the Good must be so imposed on us by ourselves or by our educators; must be worked into the mechanical and automatic basis of our rational life, if they are to fructify and not to be as seed sown by the wayside.

And in the same way, Catholicism has learnt to recognise, allow and provide for the non-religious temperament, and for the religious temperament in its non-religious moods, in its states of mere potentiality, in its rudimentary stages of development. It has learnt that though men ought to, men cannot, pray without ceasing; that in the best of us the spirit slumbers and sleeps through many of our waking hours; that in most of us its moments of full self-consciousness are few and far between; and that in the dull intervals we are left to the guidance of habits, formed or deepened in those better moments. Catholicism recognises a certain lower goodness in these semi-conscious, automatic or merely mechanical species of activity, partly as disposing towards, partly as resulting from, intelligent self-chosen acts of goodness. When the mind is barren and feeling is dead, mechanical prayers and religious practices are not so merely and utterly mechanical but that they are also exercises and acts of conscience and freewill—earnests of "the better" we fain would offer if we could, in "the day of small things," when the flax smoulders without flame, and the bruised reed cannot lift itself upright. Catholicism refuses to despise the half because it is not the whole, or to confound little with nothing. In the bare-walled conventicles of pure

reason, if the soul cannot do her best she can do nothing. In a Catholic temple she can do her second best or her third. There are altars to visit and candles to light, and beads to finger, and litanies to mutter, and the crucifix to gaze on, and a hundred little occupations not less good because others are so much better, or because abuses are easy and frequent. In short, man is psychological as well as spiritual—mostly the former; and in Catholicism he finds a lower psychological religion ministerial to the higher and spiritual; and this, not designed, or planned, or even quite acknowledged, but shaped by the necessities of humanity in the mass and on the average.

(v)

Similarly, Catholicism stands out as a religion of the whole man against the pedantry of a purely reasonable religion that would abolish the luxuriant—doubtless at times too luxuriant—wealth of symbolism in favour of a "ministry of the word" alone, taking "word" in its baldest literal sense; and that would limit the converse between God and man to what can be uttered in spoken or written language.

Yet all language is poetical in its origin. It tries to express the whole inner state—not merely the truth, but the emotions and feelings in which the truth is embedded; for the so-called "faculties"—mind, will, feeling—have not yet been marked off from one another by abstract thought. It is only later that the utility of exact ideas and corresponding verbal signs leads to prosaic precision, and turns what once were living metaphors into sober measurements. But outside this region of strict usefulness, and wherever man would

utter his whole spirit or receive the whole utterance of another spirit, the language of poetry becomes indispensable; for inward feelings are not directly communicable, but only suggestible through their outward and natural signs. We know them in ourselves alone; in others we can see but their symptoms. Because religion is of the whole soul and of no single faculty, because it springs immediately from the deep root of our nature, and not from any one of the branches, therefore the converse of man with God, of the finite spirit with the infinite, must of necessity be in the symbolic language of poetry; for it is the indistinct utterance of all that man knows, feels, and wills about God, and of all that God knows, feels, and wills about man. But not only is all exact lingual expression, but all possible lingual expression, inadequate to such fulness of utterance. In Religion as in Nature, God speaks to every sense with a thousand voices, and bids us answer Him again, as far as we can, in His own tongue. There is, then, no small pedantry of intellectualism in the notion that worship in spirit and in truth must necessarily be conducted in circumstances of sought-out plainness, and divested of all appeal to the senses, the imagination, and the emotions; of all sacraments and symbols—a worship which would suffer no more of God's message to enter the soul than can find its way through the narrow slit of common sense, and clothe itself in the stiff primness of colourless prose. Of such worship Christ and His apostles—Jews as they were and lovers of the Temple with its soul-stirring symbolism—knew nothing, nor has any religion ever thriven long on such a fallacy of puritanism strictly adhered to. If it has

exercised a soul-compelling power over the masses, it is only because it has, in fact, appealed to more than the mere understanding through psalms and hymns, and through a preaching that was impassioned as well as argumentative; that addressed the eye as well as the ear; that spoke by glances, gestures, intonation, and all the symbolism of will and emotion. A strict "rationalising" of worship would, therefore, mean an infinite impoverishment of the language of religion. One need not deny the advantages of a vernacular liturgy. Yet it may be that the mere "dumb-show" of a high mass, with all its suggestions of mystery, faith, and reverence, speaks more fully and directly to the spirit of man; does more for the right attuning of his soul, than could the most exquisitely balanced theological discourse on the sacrifice of the altar.

Here, again, it seems to us that the conservative position, as the product of the slowly accumulated experience of multitudes and centuries, has probably more to say for itself than plain common sense can see at a glance or two.

(vi)

Again, under the alluring semblance of simplification and a return to the spirit of a Gospel preached to the poor and unlettered, puritanism seems to us in some way to be vitiated by a false simplicity—a simplicity of impoverishment, not a simplicity of comprehensive unification. God, the theologians say, is infinitely simple, and yet he is the plenitude of every sort of being and perfection. And our evolutionists tell us that the highest type of organism is that in which the greatest multiplicity of structure and function is most perfectly

unified. Given equal richness of content, the simpler unity is the better; but not if the simplification be at the expense of content. The tendency of puritanism is to reduce Christianity to its lowest terms; to cast off all that has grown out of, or on to, its primitive expression; to bring it down to the level of the lowest and most universal spiritual capacity; to make it democratic in just what seems to us the wrong and popular sense of the term. For it is to favour one section of the Church at the expense of another; to starve the higher and rarer capacity in the interests of the lower and commoner; to assume that the spiritual equality of God's sons means an equality of gifts and graces; to forget that the Christian *demos* includes and needs every grade and kind of spirituality from the lowest to the highest.

For this reason as well as for its severe rationality puritanism, in spite of its studied abstract simplicity, has always been the religion of a certain class, and a certain temperament, and a certain culture. Whereas Catholicism, in spite of, or rather because of, its vast complexity, has been, as no other, a religion both of the crowds and masses, and also of the intellectual, the cultivated, the mystical, the æsthetic minority.

Seeing the intimate psychological bond that exists between the letter and the spirit, the body and the soul, the outer expression and the inner significance of a religion, we are not fanciful, but thoroughly philosophic in concluding that as a Catholic church (say S. Etienne in Paris) is to a puritan conventicle, or as Catholic public worship is to the simplicity of prayer-meeting, so is the Catholic spirit to the puritan—both simple; one

with the simplicity of an imperfectly harmonised fulness and multiplicity; the other, with that of an exclusive and rigorous parsimony. It is true that the religion of Christ is the religion of the poor and simple. But popular folk-religions have always been of the Catholic type in their untrimmed luxuriance; whereas Unitarianism, for all its abstract simplicity, has never been popular; and what commends Methodism or Salvationism to the crowd is really their departures from dryness and severity; their concessions to the experienced demands of the non-rational elements of human nature. The religion or spirit of Christ has the simplicity of a principle of life and growth; but what grows out of it is an organised multitude of beliefs, precepts, observances, and institutions in which its potential fulness and fruitfulness is progressively and endlessly revealed. The Panthéon is at once an exceedingly simple and an exceedingly complex structure, the product of repeated applications of a single law. Complex as Catholicism is, it is governed by a few simple ideas. The whole church of S. Etienne, with its altars and furniture, its ritual, its music, its cycle of fasts and feasts, is subordinated to and governed by the figure of the Crucified which surmounts the Tabernacle of His mystical presence. All is but the expansion of the meaning and significance of Christ crucified for humanity. "The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man"—there is Christianity in a nutshell; the very kernel of the Gospel. Yes; but Christianity in a nutshell is not enough. If it is to cover the needs of humanity; to spread its branches more widely, century after century; to reveal its latent possibilities; the

kernel must be taken out of the nutshell and planted. The inexhaustible plenitude of all truth lies wrapped up in the innocent formula: "The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man." As it stands it is not simple but "mysterious" in the deepest sense. The complex doctrinal system of Catholicism is really an attempt to simplify and explain it.

(vii)

Moreover, we find in such a church as S. Etienne the expression, not of an individual, but of a collective spirit, world-wide and ancient, of which it is the product. Everything there speaks of communion with a great international religious organism; with the remote past of Catholicism; and, through Catholicism, with the past of those older religions out of which it has grown. It is a visualised and sensible expression of the religious experience of the best part of humanity, by means of which the religious sense of the individual is wakened, stimulated, and informed; and his consciousness of solidarity with the general life of mankind deepened and strengthened. Every such renewed consciousness of communion with Catholicism is a sacramental reinforcement of the spiritual and "over-individual" elements of his interior life—an inward grace mediated through an outward sign. It brings the soul into a more or less dimly understood, but sensibly felt, union, not only with the religious life of past centuries, but with the secular history of France, of Europe, of the world. For Catholicism means the leavening of every human interest with the leaven of the Gospel, the christianising, not merely of the religious process, but of the whole process of civilisation—of labour, science,

art, of social and political institutions. The life of the Church has not been eremitical and aloof, but tangled—often far too much tangled—in that of the world around it. In her temples we are surrounded by the memorials, not only of saints, but of heroes and warriors and statesmen and poets and philosophers and writers; for these, too, contribute to the multitudinous elements unified in the spirit of Catholicism. To be a Catholic is to be historically related to them, to feel one's kinship with them as children of the same civilisation which Catholicism has fostered and impregnated, and of which it has been a constituent factor.

As a complexus of feelings, judgments, and impulses, a "spirit" necessarily tends to increase in complexity with every moment that brings new experiences to be drawn into its synthesis. Our life-task is one of unification, of building-in these accumulating experiences so skilfully as not to destroy, but rather to perfect the harmony of our multitudinous thoughts, desires, and sentiments. If our religion, our Christianity, is alive and growing, it must necessarily be ever evolving a complex system of feelings, determined by and determining an equally complex system of judgments, fructifying in a correspondingly complex system of impulses. Simple as is the law of these developments, the product is not simple in content, but inexhaustible beyond all formulation.

And what holds for the individual spirit, holds still more evidently for the collective spirit—the spirit of Catholicism—that resultant of the religious experience of whole nations and centuries, which is presented to us in the institutional Church, and which acts as an

instrument of spiritual education in enabling us to feed on and appropriate, according to our several needs and capacities, the gathered riches of so vast and ancient a tradition.

While, then, condemning that superfluity and lavishness which fails to secure a good, or a truth, or a loveliness that may be attained more effectually by fewer and simpler means, we condemn no less heartily that impoverishing puritanism which values such simplicity absolutely, and not merely in proportion to the richness of the result secured. To use a thousand words in expressing what could be said better in a hundred is a sin against simplicity; but it is no less a sin to use a hundred when a thousand are necessary, and to sacrifice content and clearness to brevity. Religion aims at communicating God to man, at filling the soul with the inexhaustible riches of divine truth and goodness and loveliness. It cannot put the infinite into a nutshell; it cannot put the whole truth into three words. Though it may—and often does—sin against simplicity, both by undue compression and undue diffusiveness, all the language and symbolism at its disposal is not enough for what it has got to convey.

Life on a desert island is simplified—and starved. To find everything for oneself; to be dependent on God alone—that is, on God as outside and transcendent, not as mediated through creation and humanity —means sterility in every department of life, inward and outward. Can religion be an exception? Is it not plain that its possibilities are increased in every dimension through our connection with a close-knit, world-wide, world-old communion?

(viii)

This point of antiquity, of continuity with the past, weighs with us a great deal in favour of Catholicism as one of the older surviving religions.

There are poorer and richer, thinner and fuller, moments in every life. Our best moments are those which bring the fullest light from our past and present to bear on our future; our worst, those when our past is largely obliterated, and our present narrowed just to the most immediate perceptions; when our consciousness dwindles to a point and is robbed of all breadth and depth. The ideal experience is one that would lay bare all the hidden treasures of memory. And the same holds good of the people or community whose present consciousness is richer and more fruitfully active in the measure that it is fed from the treasury of the past, and that its collective memory reaches back to remoter generations, and can produce its well-ordered stores at command. To break with the past is to cut away the roots of its life. The corporate spirit, the national sentiment, is tri-dimensional. It is not merely a sense of fellowship with the living; but still more a sense of fellowship with the dead. It is a sharing of a collective experience, whereof the greater part by far is memory and imagination. Hence the folly of that wild eighteenth-century revolutionism, which in its blind rage against the abuses of authority and tradition strove to obliterate the past as such. Hence too its necessary failure, and the return of dethroned authority, sobered but not cured of its excesses, to the temple from which the goddess of Reason-gone-mad had

driven it. Hence many an extravagance and counter-extravagance yet to come, before Reason, clothed and in her right mind, shall finally take her seat at the feet of Christ as identical with sane Authority and purified Tradition. For Authority is as blind in its way when it refuses reverence to the present and future, forgetting that growth and progress are the ends to which conservatism and stability are but ministerial. The Past may not be imposed as a dead burden on the shoulders of the Present, but needs a criticism of its values, so as to retain what is essential and to discard what is merely accidental to the process of growth. For the meaning and drift of that process reveals itself gradually. We to-day can know better than our fathers what they were aiming at and feeling after; and each generation interprets itself less wisely than it interprets its predecessors.

Catholicism, then, means a sense of communion, not only with the present but with the past multitudes of the Church's children. It is a solid, not a surface, sentiment. Its depth is even greater than its extension. Schism impoverishes the spirit even more by breaking its sensible communion with the past, than it does by severing it from the life of the present. Doubtless the conflicting claims of past and present, of authority and reason, of tradition and progress have not yet found, and may never wholly find, their adjustments. Theorisers can do little to hasten, and much to impede, Nature's slow experimental process of solving the difficulty. It was, however, a mere accident of his times and circumstances that Christ died at the hands of authority in the cause of reason and liberty. In other conditions he

would have died at the hands of liberty in the cause of authority and tradition.

(ix)

As the spiritual sense of communion with the distant multitudes of the past and present is so necessary to the essence and fulness of our selfless and social life—our life in humanity, and outside ourselves—every kind of symbolism that wakes and fosters that sense is of high educational importance for the development of the spirit. Every sign and expression of uniformity with the distant in time and place helps to make that distant near and present; to gather up the Whole into the consciousness of each several part; to make the entire organism live and work in each member. Here is the use of even the most useless hereditary aristocracy which carries down the dwellings, the traditions, the customs and other memorials of an otherwise dead and forgotten past into the midst of the living present, and thus helps a nation to feel, imagine and realise, its historical continuity. Here, too, the justification of custom for custom's sake after its original utility has been forgotten, and so long as it does not hinder a greater good than it secures. So in the Catholic Church, much of her formula, her ritual, her custom, which has lost all other use and meaning is significant and efficacious in that it feeds the corporate life of each member, and links us with the religious process of distant lands and distant ages. Apart from any other inherent value it may have, every act of conformity to such traditional observances possesses a quasi-sacramental power of deepening this sense of spiritual solidarity, of forming a new tie between the

one and the all. It is a new exercise of voluntary adherence; of faith in the common creed, of hope in the common triumph, of love of the common welfare. Chief among these effective symbols of unity are those seven sacraments which have come down to us practically from the beginning, and are accepted *semper*, *ubique*, *ab omnibus*. What the canonical scriptures are to theology, these are to the great mass of sacramental symbolism that has been developed, not so much from them, as around them, by applications of the same principle, in the same spirit; and of which some parts are more, others less, Catholic as to antiquity and universality.

Now it seems to us, rightly or wrongly, that this sacramentalism provides for a psychological and spiritual need of man's nature which is not provided for, to anything like the same degree, by newer and more narrowly localised systems. Even could they inspire us with their whole corporate life, that life strikes us as somewhat recent, narrow and separate compared with one whose roots and fibres are tangled with those of humanity. But besides this, a symbolism, like a language, must be a gradual growth. It cannot, if it is to win veneration, be invented and imposed like Esperanto. Hardly any ancient ceremony, civil or religious, but was prosaic and utilitarian in its origin; and it is just the forgottenness of that origin which lends it its suggestion of antiquity and mystery.

(x)

Again, paradoxical as it will seem, we find in a great many of the obvious paganisms, and even moral and

spiritual corruptions of Catholicism, no reason whatever for surprise or scandal, but rather another evidence of its character as a religion that has been shaped by God, working through the laws of human psychology and using the natural in the service of the supernatural. We find in them a reason for trusting it as we could never trust a theological synthesis or any other work of conscious philosophic effort.

As for its paganism, it is undeniable that in its generic aspect as a religion, one of the great religions of the world, Catholicism is older than Christ; as old as humanity itself; as old as speech and language. Religions themselves, on their social and institutional side, are but the languages in which man holds converse with God. And these languages are of one family and one origin, human and divine; the work of God through man, and of man under God; owing all their inspiration and strength to the principal cause; all their error and limitation to the feeble intelligence, the imperfect morality, of the instrumental cause.

When we say "from God through man" we do not mean merely as all man's free actions and creations presuppose divine concurrence; but as all that is done in us, and of which we are the passive subjects, is from God; as our natural instincts and supernatural inspirations are from God.

To the making of Catholicism two great streams of religious tradition have run together, each in its turn produced by the confluence of innumerable tributaries whose sources are lost in a limitless past. Of these two streams Christianised Judaism is the tributary, and the Græco-Roman empire-religion the receiver. It was not

pure Judaism; but Judaism reformed and spiritualised by the prophets; universalised by the philosophy of Alexandria; perfected in both respects by Christ; preached and proclaimed explicitly as a world-religion by St. Paul, that was rejected by the Synagogue and received by the Gentile world, already prepared to welcome a religion of humanity, a synthesis of all other religions: "He came to His own; but His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him gave He power to become the sons of God."

What is received is moulded and shaped by the receiver, as the necessary condition of its reception. The leaven buried and lost to sight in the mass of savourless paste forthwith begins a slow and wearisome struggle for the mastery. To enter into the Gentile religion, Christian Judaism had to lose nearly all its exclusively Judaic elements, retaining only such as belonged to the generic character of every religion, together with its specifically Christian difference—its belief in Christ the Son of God; the Revelation or Word of the Father; the Redeemer of mankind; the founder of an universal and spiritual Kingdom of God upon earth. Obviously in receiving a new religion men will change their forms of religious thought and expression as little as possible; and the missionary will accommodate himself to this law of least resistance as far as his conscience will stretch. Thus Christianity, following what is the true law, and the precise inverse of the supposed law, of religious development, "transubstantiates" paganism, keeping the accidents, changing the substance. It takes on itself the clothes, the regalia, of the old gods into whose temples it enters. It adopts the institutions, rites, and

terminology of the empire-religion as far as it can, and much further perhaps than it ought; it finds for them a new significance in its own interests; it uses them as a fuller and richer vehicle of self-expression than Judaism could ever have been. But plainly the adaptation is imperfect; neither of the wedded systems is at its ease; each tries to force the other violently to its own shape. Whence a continual paganising of Christianity, concurrent with a continual Christianising of paganism—a process which we see at work even in the Catholicism of to-day; for the Church is as yet young in history, and the Gospel-leaven far from victorious. Paganism will have found in Christ all that it sought elsewhere—a true Logos, and incarnation of deity, a Son of God; but will in many ways have debased the truth in endeavouring to understand it in terms of a less spiritual religion. Christ, the impersonation of the Gospel—of the Truth that He taught and that He was—will have entered into the temple prepared for another god, but in so doing He will have purified it of its defilements, and have given spiritual significance and sacramental efficacy to everything at all susceptible of redemption.

And so in a thousand ways Christianity will have preached, and paganism will have apprehended, the new religion in terms of the old; nor do the laws of human thought admit of any other supposition, especially when we remember that the empire was not won to Christianity by individual conversions, but by the *en masse* accession of multitudes, to whom at first it can have meant little more than a change of names. As little could a new religion be abruptly imposed on a

race as could a new language. Religions are growths, not manufactures. Herein is their strength and their dignity. Catholicism is but the most fully developed branch of a tree that springs from the very roots of humanity, and bears traces and proofs of its kinship with every other branch of the religious process. Its paganisms bear testimony not only to its antiquity and universality, but still more to the strength and vigour of the Christian spirit, which can subdue all things to its own ends and uses. It is greater to capture the enemy's fleet than to destroy it. The conquest is not yet complete; the conflict is not yet over; the old pagan spirit still holds its own in part; in part still claims what has been wrested from it; the synthesis is still in the making. But as we have already said, incoherencies and inconsistencies are a sign of natural life and growth; while artificial completeness means stagnation and death.

(xi)

What concerns the other corruptions and diseases to which Catholicism is subject, be they moral, intellectual, or æsthetic—whether ignorance, or error, or superstition, or intolerance, or dogmatism, or sacerdotalism, or clericalism, or worldliness, or ambition, or licentiousness, or cruelty, or fraud, or mendacity, or avarice, or vulgarity —we are the last to wish to minimise them or palliate them, just because we feel that if they constitute a difficulty at all, it is that they should obtain in any degree and not that they should do so in a great degree. Once abandon the notion of a society of sinless saints; once accept the parables of the wheat and tares, of the good fish and the bad, of the leaven and the meal, and

you have no reason to postulate that tares shall be the exception, or that the leaven shall sensibly predominate. The forces and obstacles with which the Gospel has to contend are not evenly distributed through the world and through the ages. When it has leavened five measures of meal, fifty may unexpectedly be added, and the whole process thrown back for generations.

Before it was a distinct religion, while it was yet but a revival movement in the bosom of Judaism, Christianity was a little band of saints getting ready for the near advent of the Day of Judgment. But when their eyes were opened to a deeper understanding of the Kingdom, and to the true perspective of their hopes; when they realised that the salt of the earth must be mingled with the earth; that the light of the world must not be sheltered under a bushel from the risk of extinction, but set in the open to struggle with surrounding darkness, they saw that they must enlarge their borders and find room for the sinner beside the saint, and that their little spiritual aristocracy must develop into a world-embracing religious institution.

And every attempt, from Montanism onwards, to reproduce the primitive Society of Saints in the absence of those primitive convictions and hopes that made it possible for a time, has issued in the worst of all corruptions—hypocrisy and pretence. For as soon as any external profession—Christian, priest, pope, monk, and the like—is supposed to be a guarantee for certain spiritual and moral attainments, and not merely for aspirations, duties, and ideals, pride, both corporate and individual, will cover its failures with the cloak of sanctimoniousness.

It is impossible, then, that the Church should leaven the world without being leavened by it. "I pray," said Christ, "not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil"—a prayer which looks to the inevitableness of such contamination to a greater or less degree. If the visible Church is to be spotless, she must fly to the desert and leave the world to its fate. We might as well ask for an ideal, incorruptible State as for an incorruptible Church. Both equally fall short of their profession; neither can afford to throw stones at the other.

As for the long and sordid record of clerical scandal that we find in Church history, the persistent recrudescences of avarice, ambition, and licentiousness in the ministers of the sanctuary, it is hard to see what more it can prove against Catholicism than the like phenomena in the ministers of law and government can prove against law and government. The attempt to deny or mitigate such charges seems to imply the worst sort of "sacerdotalism"—namely, the right of priests in virtue of their merely official and ecclesiastical superiority to that honour which belongs solely to personal, ethical, and "charismatic" superiority. It is all-important to keep distinct the invisible and spiritual hierarchy from the visible and official hierarchy of the Church; to see in the latter but the symbol and servant of the former; to see in the former Christ Himself, vicariously represented by the latter; to distinguish the preconstitutional formless Church from the governmental form which it has elaborated for its own apostolic needs. Deplorable as they are, the corruptions of the official hierarchy keep this vital distinction

clear before the Catholic consciousness, and save us from man-worship. If, notwithstanding, sacerdotalism has flourished in Catholicism as nowhere else, it has been of a far more naïve and less dangerous character than that of puritanism. It has been based on a crudely materialistic imagination of the source and nature of the priest's spiritual dignity and authority; on the arrogation of magical, quasi-physical powers. It was almost inevitable that this pagan conception of priesthood should have mingled with, and for a time have almost overcome, that Christian conception according to which the priest is but the authenticated instrument and representative through whom the whole Church functions, and in whom it is Christ, or the Church, who baptises, blesses, consecrates, anoints, absolves, teaches, and rules.

(xii)

While sympathising profoundly with the self-costing revolt of so pure, upright, and conscientious a soul as that of Blanco White against ecclesiastical corruptions, we cannot but regard his secession as a crude and unsatisfying solution. He failed to see what perhaps no one in his time and surroundings could have seen, that the health of Catholicism, and of every religious institution of the Catholic type, lies in a balance of opposing and never perfectly reconcilable tendencies; that its diseases result from the inevitable disturbances of that balance; that dogmatism, sacerdotalism, legalism, formalism and the like are merely excesses of what is good, of tendencies that hold in check other tendencies no less liable to abuse. The issue in his

typical case was that extreme anti-ecclesiasticism which looks on Christ as standing for the pure negation, and not for the reform of all those elements natural to religion whose abuse He combated; which forgets that Christ loved and practised the Jewish religion all His life; that if He and His apostles died excommunicated it was not because they had rejected it, but because its officials had rejected them; that their informal, family, wayside worship was not a substitute for, but a supplement to the religion of the Temple, with its priesthood, its sacrifices, its ceremonial, its laws. It was only as violently cut off from that religion and from the conditions of its practice, not as condemning it, that the early Christian community, prior to its alliance with the Græco-Roman religion, was left formless, without temple, priest, or altar, like the unhoused hermit-crab wandering unprotected in search of a new and larger shell.

Had he appreciated this, had he not mistaken the messianic reform movement for the new religion that was to be, but that as yet was not, either in fact or in intention; had he realised that Christ and Peter would have clung to the Synagogue if the Synagogue had not expelled them, Blanco White might have seen, as we do, the true solution of his difficulties in the attitude of Christ towards Judaism. He would have faced and borne unjust excommunication if necessary; but he would not have seceded.

On its external and institutional side a religion of the Jewish or Catholic type is a social organism, built up and shaped by the repetitions, customs and habits of past generations, and transmitted by them to the

present, to be again preserved and perfected for the use of future generations. We inherit it as we inherit the city or State, which every century adds to and improves, and which becomes progressively the instrument of an ever increasing fulness of social life. By dint of repetition and insistence, new adaptations harden into habit and custom; and become a "second nature" to the institution.

The tendency of the unreflecting multitude at all times is to be passively determined by imitation, habit, and custom; and indeed this is the normal condition of the fulness and fruitfulness of their lives, since it frees their attention and energy for dealing with those irregularities of experience for which custom can make no provision, directed, as it is, to the uniform and recurrent contingencies. Yet general and abiding changes of circumstances, and the progressive enrichment of public life by accumulating experience, demand a continual formation of new habits, laws, and customs, and a modification or abolition of those that have become inadequate or obstructive; they demand an endless labour of reform and readjustment, whose cessation means social disease and death. Such reform is naturally the function of the provident and progressive minority which constitutes the plastic principle of the social organism, and to which there answers, on the part of the multitudes, a certain just-conquerable stubbornness—a power of resistance that yields reluctantly to innovation; a power of retaining impressions as if graven by steel on rock. This resistant organism of customs, laws, rites, and dogmas is the subject-matter of the prophet's or

reformer's energy; it is the dead letter that at once serves and opposes his living spirit; the rough block that he must shape and chisel in the sweat of his brow. He is at war with it; yet not to destroy, but to perfect and fulfil. Let him destroy it in petulant anger, and he destroys himself; for it is "object" to his subjectivity.

So it was with Christ and the Jewish Church of his day, who exemplify these two normal yet conflicting elements of every living religion, the progressive and the stationary—the latter driven towards reaction in self-defence, the former towards revolt; whence a tension that may end in schism, through fault on either side. But whereas most prophets minister to some one particular religion, and to some one particular disease of that, Christ's medicine was of universal efficacy. He rose up against those fundamental corruptions common to Judaism with every institutional religion—against perverse and unspiritual conceptions of God and the soul, of Heaven and Hell; of priesthood and sacrifice; of sacrament and ceremony; of sin, prayer, atonement, repentance, asceticism. Hence, His was implicitly a reform of every religion as exemplified in Judaism; it was of catholic importance and extension; a leaven as applicable to the Græco-Roman as to the Hebrew religion. In it we find the assertion of those principles which are ever struggling in Catholicism against the principles of religious decadence. In Him we may study the right attitude of a loyal Catholic towards ecclesiastical scandals and corruptions.

May it not be, then, that in breaking away from a painful and aggressive environment, men like Blanco

White have really destroyed the condition of their own spiritual development as members of that active-minded minority whose resistance to the passive majority is essential to the Church's life, and whose place in her economy is to maintain that balance of opposites in which her health consists? Is it not through conflict with such uncongenial surroundings that such characters are braced up and held together? Have not saints and schismatics been shaped from the same stuff by the same methods—those successfully, these unsuccessfully? The negative peace of difficulties evaded and not conquered; the peace of the desert spells spiritual stagnation and decay. Doubtless we must not make this a reason for remaining in Hell, or in a society whose badness is irremediable, or so excessive as to overwhelm and carry us along in its current. But it may be a reason why a society of saints might not be the best school of sanctity; and why the better and the best men in a community must always expect to be at war with the inert and backward majority, and must strain every muscle to tow the passive, unwieldy barge up-stream.

It is said of Ignatius Loyola, of Marie Angélique, and others, that they were at one time inspired to seek out a relaxed rather than an observant religious order as the theatre of their pursuit of perfection. Their instinct seems sound. For such an order has the advantage of a high theoretical standard and many means and opportunities of grace, without the grave disadvantage of a strong current of public opinion and example facilitating the practice of morality by non-moral or immoral motives. When all around us are

observant, when regularity is respectable and laxity disreputable, we can never know how far our religion is merely respectability; we can never test and deepen its roots by the exercise of opposition and independence. But where indifference and corruption prevail to some extent, whatever little success we may realise is purely the fruit of our liberty; and such examples as we find in the small minority are a thousandfold more helpful because of their unrewarded spontaneity. Where human respect is on the side of edification, there the pharisee and hypocrite abound. It is not only good example, but still more bad example, which edifies and instructs us; for we know things best by their contraries. We learn more medicines from disease than from health. Errors are necessary for the penetration and comprehension of truth. From our neighbours' sins and mistakes we learn a thousand ways and possibilities of going wrong, and thus, as by a prism, the white light of perfection is analysed for us, and broken up into its several components—its partial and therefore defective manifestations.

Unlike the apostolic band of saints, the Catholic Church is a community of the called as well as of the chosen. But many are called and few are chosen. In the Kingdom of Grace, as in that of Nature, failure is the rule, success the exception.

(xiii)

Again, we feel that Catholicism is, in tendency, a religion of all levels of spiritual development, and not of one only; that it has milk for babes and meat for adults; that it is a language in which the simplest and

the subtlest can hold converse with Heaven on the shallowest themes and the deepest. And this range and versatility commends it to us as a product of experience, of God working through Nature; and not a device of human reflection. We should find a more exclusively aristocratic or a more exclusively popular religion hard to reconcile with the universalism of Christ's spirit. If there is much that offends my taste, or violates my reason, or shocks my moral sense, what right have I to make my subjective needs a standard for all so long as I am free? It is not enough that my religion suits *me*, it must suit mankind; it must cater for all—just as the State must look to the interests of every class, and not only to mine. I could not be satisfied with a religion which, however much it did for me, did nothing for the masses or for the classes—too academic for the former, too barbaric for the latter. The board spread for all must have every sort of fare, so that each may find something, though none can find everything, to his taste and requirement. It is no small gain to be forced into one pale and communion with spiritual sorts and conditions so unlike our own, and to be compelled to bear with, and learn from others who have to bear with and learn from us, and thus to overcome our mental insularity.

Thus there is an æsthetic intolerance that despises the day of small things, and would impose abruptly upon the worship of the rude and uncultured a severity in music, decoration, and the like for which they are educationally unprepared, which fails to detect in their woefully barbaric beginnings a partial, if inadequate, self-utterance of the beautiful, which forgets that our

own higher expressions are only relatively less inadequate.

And there is an intellectual intolerance which treats truth as an exact equation of thought to thing, which knows no half-truths, but only Yea and Nay, and brands as a lie whatever deviates from mathematical precision. Of the merely approximate character of our best religious conceptions it has no suspicion, but would force, as finally true, on childish minds what even for adults is only a less inadequate approximation. It will not tolerate what it considers the falsehoods through which the unfolding mind must pass if the fuller truth is to be of its own growing, and not merely stuck in rootless from outside. To it the malice of superstition consists in mental error and ignorance, and not merely in the demoralising and decadent results that sometimes attend it—not merely in the evasion of duty by external observances—in the neglect of natural means through trust in charms or in prayer.

It is not superstition if men turn to Mary, as a truer embodiment of the divine, rather than to a God, whom they ignorantly suppose to be inhuman and vindictive. But if they think her intercession and favour will allow them to live more carelessly for having a friend in court, that indeed is essentially superstition. Yet God Himself may be worshipped superstitiously by the most infallible theologian who over lived.

And lastly, there is an ethical intolerance, both as to moral standards and to moral attainments, which seems again to make no account of the laws of growth, to demand an impossible uniformity of level, and to forget that the ethical, like the æsthetic and intellectual, educa-

tion of persons and classes, must be graduated. Nature does nothing in jumps. The highest cannot abruptly be fitted on to the lowest. We must be content to lead men from where they stand to the next stage, and not to the next but one. And this wisdom and toleration is forced on us in a Church which is the home of all sorts and conditions of men, of whom no class or level can say to the other: "I have no need of thee," and where the law of Christ bids us bear one another's burdens.

(xiv)

Again, one of the most fundamental and distinctive principles of Catholicism is the subjection of the individual mind, will, and sentiment in matters of religion to the collective mind, will, and sentiment of the community; of the private to the Catholic conscience; in a word, the principle of authority. And here once more it seems to us that the system has been shaped by the psychological laws of man's spiritual development; that it is devised, not by the wit of man, but by the wisdom of God working through Nature.

We find but different utterances of the same truth in the popular adages that "two heads are better than one," or that "in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," and in Christ's promise that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." When objective truth is in question—and the Church judges only of what is true for all—individual judgment is liable to the warp of private ends and interests, to the prejudices of tribe and caste, to the limitations of a narrow and imperfect experience, to personal fallacies of inference and induction. All

these sources of illusion are removed in proportion as the same conclusion is reached by an ever greater number of truly independent witnesses, and is maintained from land to land and from generation to generation. This goes without saying, and only means that the social and collective mind is the full and adequate organ through which the truth is made manifest.

But it is the voice of the people, and not that of the populace, which is the voice of God. The crowd's agreement is valid and decisive only as to appearances and immediate perceptions. It is worthless when inferences and underlying realities are in question. In such matters its witnesses are never truly independent witnesses; their agreement is caused and not reasoned; it is a passively received impression from a common external influence—imitation, obedience, faith in the faith of others, and so forth.

The voice of the populace is not the voice of the people. It is not a product of original faith or reason or spiritual intuition. The general life of a permanent community gives birth to a complex body of opinions, sentiments, and practical attitudes in regard to a thousand matters. In this body we can distinguish between the average and the best and the worst. And we observe in it a progress, or shifting upwards, whereby the best of to-day becomes the average of to-morrow, and the average of to-day becomes the worst of to-morrow. And thus truth works its way into the community, entering in at the apex of the pyramid and spreading downwards to the base. The higher, as à Kempis says, does not stand without the lower.

Every level is necessary to the whole structure and process. But when we wish to educate our children we push them upwards, and strive to bring them under the influence of the very best that has been thought, and felt, and spoken, and written on every subject. And in so doing, we recognise that though it is the same truth which percolates the whole community, it is found more pure and undiluted at the apex than at the base; and that though it is one and the same collective mind which is in process of formation, that process is more advanced with the few than with the many. What we mean then by the voice of the people in Church or State is not the average opinion, but the best, the highest product, the ripest fruit of the whole social process; the nearest approximation to truth as yet realised by the labour of the collective mind. The progress of that mind depends on our discontent with the best, and on our endeavour to interpret its deeper implications, and reach forward to its future developments. And to do so successfully, we must determine the direction in which the whole process is moving; we must consider the base along with the altitude and inclination; the lower along with the higher; the past along with the present. For each part throws light on all the rest; and helps us to determine what is and what is not congenial to the entire process, what is and what is not a true interpretation of the social mind.

The common objection that authority, so understood, is hostile to liberty of conscience and to intellectual sincerity is really baseless. It is valid against corruptions of the principle, but not against the principle itself. For it is psychologically impossible for any

individual so to get outside the social process which has made him what he is, as to form a judgment which shall at once be just and yet contradictory to the social mind. Either he has blundered and misinterpreted the social mind, in which case it is only his liberty of error that is violated; or he has interpreted it more deeply and truly than the average and official interpreters, in which case he *differs* from these, but does not *contradict* them, inasmuch as his is only a stricter conformity to the same rule as they profess to obey. He will be accounted heterodox by the average, but he will have an intuitive certainty that he is nothing of the sort, and that where he stands to-day they will stand to-morrow. From the nature of the case he can understand and justify them, though they cannot understand and justify him.

Only through such differences from the average and official reading of the social mind has progress been made at any time—by the often embittered conflict between the principle of movement, and the principle of stability.

We must not allow that it is only by blameworthy revolt that advance is possible, or that fruitful experiments can be tried; we must not admit that moral evil is a necessary condition of social improvement. We must hold that there is also a blameless dissent from that average and official judgment which of its essential nature is, and should be, hostile to progress. When we depart from it for purely self-interested motives we are manifestly immoral. When we do so merely because we do not see the utility or justice of some law or custom or sentiment or tradition,

based probably on a wider collective experience than we can possibly compass or estimate, we are guilty of freakishness and self-conceit; even though our motive be the common good. But when we positively see that the average judgment or custom has grown to be a public danger and impediment; and, moreover, when we find a growing multitude of sporadic and independent witnesses to the same conviction, then in following this minority against the majority, we are following a surer than the average reading of the social mind; nor can we be said to contradict or disobey the lower social tribunal in conforming ourselves to the higher.

True originality which learns and assimilates, before it attempts to teach and improve on, social tradition is one thing; eccentricity or sham originality which would teach before it has learnt, is another. Granted that ideals are far distant; that the tyranny of average and official judgment has often sterilised the Church and retarded her progress by the repression of a great deal of creative thought and effort, yet what may be called the "selective" value of the system must not be overlooked. It is most desirable that those who eventually do get the lead of the progressive movement and overcome the inertia of the average, should be the very strongest and the very best; that mediocrity, eccentricity, and blatancy should never be able to seize the reins; that the pedant, the crank, the faddist, should have nothing to do with the process of social development. And this is certainly secured by the jealous and repressive attitudes of the organised average. Only the strongest, the best, and the most prudent can without disaster

force their way through the barriers and barbed wires opposed to every departure from the customary and traditional. Whatever worth is repressed, or is killed in resisting repression, may not always be too high a price to pay for the repression of so much that is worthless and dangerous. Nor is it merely a gain to literature and philosophy that the forced necessity of expressing the new in terms of the old produces a subtlety and delicacy both of thought and style lacking to those whose facile Muse is unfettered, and making all the difference between hammered steel and cast iron. The chief gain is to the process of social development itself, which requires that the new shall not contradict but comprehend and justifiy the old; not to speak of the gain to the work itself, which instead of being wasted in the wild effort to create a new world, is eternalised in contributing to the advance and perfection of the old. We do not mean that blatancy and sham originality are not as rampant in the Church as elsewhere. But they are harmless and ineffectual; always on the side of the average or sub-average; always shouting safely with the largest crowd. They do not get the lead, or affect the Church's history in any permanent way as the great saints, and doctors, and reformers have affected it.

To represent these and similar good results as due to the sage design, the preternatural wisdom and foresight of the official world, is, of course, mere sophistry. Society is not worked that way, but by the conflict of opposite interests, each caring for itself alone. It is in spite of itself that the conservative interest furthers the progressive, and the progressive the conservative.

While then we regret the excesses of either, we are not surprised at them, nor do we find in them any argument against the principles so abused; and we confess that we prefer the type of mental and moral greatness, produced within a closely organised traditional institution, to that which flourishes under easier and less costing conditions of growth.

(xv)

Turning our attention more particularly to the influence of authority over mental development in matters outside revelation and dogmatic reassertions of revelation (for in regard to these latter development does not obtain)—in other words, to the whole body of tradition which has developed round, but outside, revealed truth, and is but its protective envelope—it seems to us that what S. T. Coleridge says of the sacred Scriptures (*Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*) must be said of the whole Catholic tradition whereof they are but a canonised part.

The distinction between written and unwritten, canonical and extra-canonical tradition is not essential, but to some extent arbitrary and conventional. There is, however, a real difference between what is sifted and approved, and what, after a time, is winnowed out and rejected; between what has sprung up quickly, and as quickly withered away, because it had no root in man's spiritual nature, and what has stood the test of time and tempest; between words from the lips heard for a day and forgotten, and words from the heart of humanity, whose sound has gone out into all lands to reverberate as long as the world shall last.

To a vast extent this sifting process is natural, and is governed by psychological laws; but like other natural processes it may be assisted (and, of course, also impeded) by artificial guidance and by the attempted understanding of its meaning and direction. There are professional guardians of tradition whose office it is to distinguish growth from deformity, and to keep the stream pure; and who acquit themselves with a varying success measured by their understanding of the process and the skill and energy with which they apply such understanding to the work in question. The need of such a class is obvious. For though every special process might be trusted to itself if it existed apart (as by abstraction we can think of it apart) from the entire process of human development, yet such isolation is but the work of abstract thought, and does not obtain in the real world where interests jostle and oust and corrupt one another in their struggle for pre-eminence—each claiming that unfettered liberty which is only the right of all collectively. Because religion and religious tradition are not outside life as a whole, but tangled with every other thread of its texture, they are corruptible and need, as does every great interest, the art and intelligence of appointed guardians to look after their rights and privileges.

Coleridge would be the first to acknowledge the benefit religious tradition received by the formation of the canon of Scripture; by the exclusion, even if too severe, of works of dubious inspiration and authority; by the inclusion, even if too uncritical, of what a fairly universal and continuous experience had proved to be of the best quality. Yet this was no spontaneous result of

tradition left to itself and its own laws, but of the deliberate intervention of men who were the official guardians of tradition, and whose successors to-day exercise the same office in regard to the further developments of the same tradition.

And in these non-scriptural parts of the Christian tradition we can distinguish what is canonical, deutero-canonical, tolerated, disapproved. And even within the canonical part we must find the same difference which Coleridge finds in the Bible, and which no one now cares to dispute, between meat, bone, and gristle. We cannot have the meat without the bone, the edible without the inedible; but we do not attempt to swallow and digest the bone along with the meat. This tradition is as a banquet spread by the millions of the past for the millions of the present—a selection from the religious experiences of whole races and centuries. Even the Bible, which is sometimes opposed to tradition as "the pure word of God," is after all the voice of the Church of many generations—of God speaking in and through the religious experience of successive multitudes under all the limitations of their mentality and language. From this infinitely varied store of nutriment each can draw according to his need, if only he will be tolerant of the different needs and tastes of others. It is not all for him.

Perhaps the strongest cumulative argument for the Catholic tradition is the same *mutatis mutandis* which Coleridge finds for the divinity of the Bible and which I reproduce.

"In every generation, and wherever the light of Revelation has shone, men of all ranks, conditions, and

states of mind, have found in this volume a correspondent for every movement toward the better, felt in their own hearts, the needy soul has found supply, the feeble a help, the sorrowful a comfort; yea, be the recipiency the least that can consist with moral life, there is an answering grace ready to enter. The Bible has been found a Spiritual World, spiritual and yet at the same time outward and common to all. You in one place, I in another, all men somewhere or at some time, meet with an assurance that the hopes and fears, the thoughts and yearnings that proceed from, or tend to, a right spirit in us, are not dreams or fleeting singularities, no voices heard in sleep, or spectres which the eye suffers but not perceives. As if on some dark night a pilgrim, suddenly beholding a bright star moving before him, should stop in fear and perplexity. But lo! traveller after traveller passes by him, and each, being questioned whither he is going, makes answer, 'I am following yon guiding star!' The pilgrim quickens his own steps, and presses onward in confidence. More confident still will he be, if, by the wayside, he should find, here and there, ancient monuments, each with its votive lamp, and on each the name of some former pilgrim, and a record that there he had first seen or begun to follow the benignant Star!

"Nor otherwise is it with the varied contents of the Sacred Volume. The hungry have found food, the thirsty a living spring, the feeble a staff, and the victorious warfarer songs of welcome and strains of music; and as long as each man asks on account of his wants, and asks what he wants, no man will discover aught amiss or deficient in the vast and many-

chambered storehouse, But if, instead of this, an idler or scoffer should wander through the rooms, peering and peeping, and either detects, or fancies he has detected, here a rusted sword or pointless shaft, there a tool of rude construction, and superseded by later improvements (and preserved, perhaps, to make us more grateful for them);—which of two things will a sober-minded man,—who, from his childhood upward, had been fed, clothed, armed, and furnished with the means of instruction from this very magazine—think the fitter plan? Will he insist that the rust is not rust, or that it is a rust *sui generis*, intentionally formed on the steel for some mysterious virtue in it, and that the staff and astrolabe of a shepherd-astronomer are identical with, or equivalent to, the quadrant and telescope of Newton or Herschel? Or will he not rather give the curious inquisitor joy of his mighty discoveries, and the credit of them for his reward?

"Or lastly, put the matter thus: For more than a thousand years the Bible, collectively taken, has gone hand in hand with civilisation, science, law—in short, with the moral and intellectual cultivation of the species, always supporting, and often leading the way. Its very presence, as a believed Book, has rendered the nations emphatically a chosen race, and this too in exact proportion as it is more or less generally known and studied. Of those nations which in the highest degree enjoy its influences it is not too much to affirm that the differences, public and private, physical, moral, and intellectual, are only less than what might be expected from a diversity in species. Good and holy men, and the best and wisest of mankind, the kingly

spirits of history, enthroned in the hearts of mighty nations, have borne witness to its influences, have declared it to be beyond compare the most perfect instrument, the only adequate organ, of Humanity; the organ and instrument of all the gifts, powers, and tendencies, by which the individual is privileged to rise above himself—to leave behind, and lose his dividual phantom self, in order to find his true self in that Distinctness where no division can be—in the Eternal I AM, the Ever-living WORD, of whom all the elect, from the archangel before the throne to the poor wrestler with the Spirit *until the breaking of day*, are but the fainter and still fainter echoes. And are all these testimonies and lights of experience to lose their value and efficiency because I feel no warrant of history, or Holy Writ, or of my own heart for denying, that in the framework and outward case of this instrument a few parts may be discovered of less costly materials and of meaner workmanship? Is it not a fact that the Books of the New Testament were tried by their consonance with the rule, and according to the analogy of faith? Does not the universally admitted canon—that each part of Scripture must be interpreted by the spirit of the whole—lead to the same practical conclusion as that for which I am now contending—namely, that it is the spirit of the Bible, and not the detached words and sentences, that is infallible and absolute? Practical, I say, and spiritual too; and what knowledge not practical or spiritual are we entitled to seek in our Bibles? Is the grace of God so confined—are the evidences of the present and actuating Spirit so dim and doubtful—that to be assured of the same we must

first take for granted that all the life and co-agency of our humanity is miraculously suspended?

"As long as Christians considered their Bible as a plenteous entertainment, where every guest, duly called and attired, found the food needful and fitting for him, and where each—instead of troubling himself about the covers not within his reach—beholding all around him glad and satisfied, praised the banquet and thankfully glorified the Master of the feast—so long did the tenet —that the Scriptures were written under the special impulse of the Holy Ghost—remain safe and profitable. Nay, in the sense, and with the feelings, in which it was asserted, it was a truth—a truth to which every spiritual believer now and in all times will bear witness by virtue of his own experience. And if in the overflow of love and gratitude they confounded the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, working alike in weakness and in strength, in the morning mists and in the clearness of the full day; if they confounded this communion and co-agency of divine grace, attributable to the Scripture generally, with those express, and expressly recorded, communications and messages of the Most High which form so large and prominent a portion of the same Scriptures; if, in short, they did not always duly distinguish the inspiration, the inbreathement, of the predisposing and assisting SPIRIT from the revelation of the informing WORD, it was at worst a harmless hyperbole. It was holden by all, that if the power of the Spirit from without furnished the text, the grace of the same Spirit from within must supply the comment.

"Let it but be read as by such men it used to be read; when they came to it as to a ground covered with manna,

even the bread which the Lord had given for his people to eat; where he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had still no lack. They gathered every man according to his eating. They came to it as to a treasure-house of Scriptures; each visitant taking what was precious and leaving as precious for others;—Yea, more, says our worthy old Church-historian, Fuller, where 'the same man at several times may in his apprehension prefer several Scriptures as best, formerly most affected with one place, for the present more delighted with another, and afterwards, conceiving comfort therein not so clear, choose other places as more pregnant and pertinent to his purpose. Thus God orders it, that divers men (and perhaps the same man at divers times) make use of all His gifts, gleaning and gathering comfort as it is scattered through the whole field of the Scripture.'"

* * * * * *

The objections against tradition, as we have described it, are often directed rather against the consequences of some theory about it, than against what it is in experience and history; or at least what it would be if unaffected by such theories. The view of the Bible as being of one texture and level from Genesis to Revelation was a view fraught with danger to religion and morality—a danger which was realised whenever living tradition was discarded for a religion of the Bible only, with the result that the spirit of the Gospel was adulterated with that of the earliest stages of religious barbarism. In Catholicism such an inspiration-theory never fructified in practice, and the Bible was instinc-

tively left to the learned, till these days when a truer perspective has dispelled the dangerous illusion. And so with tradition. Imposed *en bloc* as of equal value throughout, it would be more of a curse than a blessing. But, theories notwithstanding, it never has obtained such an acceptance in the life of the Church. It has been accepted as a whole only in the sense that it contains truth of all sorts and levels, and stands in need of continual sifting and correction. As for the theories about it, they too are but part of it, and their value is ever under discussion.

While, then, we do not wish to minimise the abuses and limitations of the principle of tradition, we are far from certain that it can be safely disregarded by any religious synthesis which is to do more for the future than Catholicism has done for the past.

(xvi)

To conclude, Catholicism seems to us to stand for the widest, the oldest, the deepest stream of collective Christian experience. As such, its mind moves more slowly than that of younger and narrower systems. It reaches the truth more tardily because its experiments are conducted on a far larger scale; because it looks back on a longer past, and round on a wider present; because it advances with the grave pace of Nature and will not be rushed on by its theoricians. Better, we feel, to be borne more quietly along on the bosom of this broad, slow current than to be hurried along more rapidly on the surface of some brawling stream. If our religious life is a corporate super-individual life; if it approximates in ideal to the

religious life of humanity, we will not wish to press forward alone, but will gladly hold back to help on the rest of our fellow-travellers.

(xvii)

These, then, are some very few considerations typical of the sort that weigh with what are usually called "liberal" Catholics, and make it possible for them, without prejudice to their honesty or their intelligence, to remain comparatively unmoved in the face of the enormous and undeniable indictment that can be brought against their religion. Disconnected and casual as they are, they can make no pretence at constituting a synthesis or complete apology. Indeed, they go to show that such a synthesis is from the nature of things impossible; that Catholicism, like the civilisation of which it is a factor, being in endless process of unfolding and explaining itself, cannot be comprehended and explained as if it were planned and carried out by the wit of man. They study it, and view it from this side and that; not as a theory or a paper-religion, but as an historical phenomenon, a living concrete reality. There is nothing in these or a hundred such reasons to force any man to believe in Catholicism; but there is much to incline him to adhere to it; and certainly enough to show that there is more than unconscious bias or blindness to account for his hesitation to renounce it.

The surprise which such hesitation on the part of the fully informed Catholic causes to the equally informed non-Catholic is due in great measure to the persistent confusion of the theory of Catholicism with the thing.

This confusion is the work of controversy; of the word-war between system and system, in which Catholicism necessarily stands for a set of theses and propositions, and not for a living social organism with two thousand years of history behind it, comprehensible only to an infinite mind. The theological scheme of the Church is as little exhaustive of her reality as the categories of physical science are exhaustive of the nature and meaning of the universe. "Our little systems have their day," but God's works are immeasurably deeper than our understanding can dive, and higher than it can soar. Now if Catholicism meant the theory of Catholicism as presented in the current manuals of apologetic theology, the liberal Catholic would be inexcusable in the eyes of the fully informed outsider. For that theory is not, as some suppose, sick or dying, but dead and only waiting to be buried and forgotten. As long, however, as it is above ground at all, it is an abiding stumbling-block and offence to many who, attending to the apologists, identify the Church on paper with the Church in experience. But in truth the Church of experience goes her way as little affected by the theorisers as is the orderly course of the universe by the speculations of science. The monkey believed he was driving the elephant as long as their ways coincided; but when their ways parted the latter pursued his stately march all heedless of his rider's impotent chatter. So it has been with Catholicism in the past; so it will be in the future. We shall never find a theory to fit it. We shall never quite know what it is, or what it may turn into—a controversial disadvantage no doubt, but not without compensations.

The considerations on which we have dwelt are not exactly reasons of the head, nor yet reasons of the heart, but rather reasons of life and experience. On the whole we do not see any system which satisfies so many of the exigencies of man's religious nature, while most systems are woefully lacking in some of these requirements to which Catholicism answers. They offer us the symmetry and elegance of a well-weeded garden, neatly walled in; but not the wild luxuriance of mountain and plain and valley and forest primeval. In them we should feel cramped and stifled and cut off from the great unwalled garden of Nature, far too vast ever to be brought into order to such an extent. Because we can comprehend and define, we cannot reverence the work of human reason as we can reverence that of divine reason.

While others are asking if Catholicism on paper is true, we are asking if Catholicism in history is alive and going to live. We do not say that the former question has nothing to do with the latter. It matters much for successful self-management whether a man understands or misunderstands his own physical constitution, and the unhistorical *a priori* and sectarian theories of Catholicism now in vogue are plainly a grave obstacle to the Church. But that they count for enough to endanger her existence may surely be doubted in the light of history. Eventually the elephant goes his own way, and his rider either dismounts, or else changes his plans to save his dignity.

Similarly, a more historically and philosophically adequate comprehension of Catholicism will, no doubt, do much for its renovation and progress.

To have recognised that the supernatural character of religion in general, and of Catholicism in particular, consists with its being a co-factor in the natural process of man's spiritual development, is one of the first conditions for its redemption and successful cultivation. At present it is in the helpless condition that physical science was in before Bacon, or medicine in the days of Galen. It is the unresisting prey of diseases and epidemics, which men in their ignorance put down to the visitation of God or the intervention of the Devil. Looking to preternatural agencies at once, they never discover the natural causes of such ills, or apply the natural remedies often to hand. Let religion be accepted as part of the natural process of civilisation, and men will observe and study the laws of its growth and decay, and through such knowledge will be able to further the one and hinder the other as never heretofore.

Yet, however much we may improve upon Nature by understanding and obeying her laws, she lives by her own vitality and not by our ingenuity, and runs her course for the most part independently of our assistance. It is the Church that produces theologies, not theologies that produce the Church. The leaves come and go, but the tree remains; they hang upon it, it does not hang upon them.

Viewing the matter this way, we can still hope, in these days when those who identify the Church with a theory must indeed despair. And for the same reason we think it worth our while to seek a defence for so much that to others must seem unworthy of a serious thought. For in everything that has obtained

wide and enduring currency in her life, we recognise the product of some natural law of religious psychology, under which a discerning criticism will detect at least the perversion or imperfect expression of a vital truth; and this, because for us it is a product of life and experience, and not of reflection and design. Instead of brushing aside revelation, dogma, theology, infallibility, miracles, papalism, and so forth as riddled with bullets of criticism; instead of treating them as mere theses and theories, we are confident that they stand for experienced values imperfectly apprehended and expressed; and that they must be retained as they are until those values can find a clearer and higher expression.

(xviii)

Again, it is our trust in Catholicism as divine with the divinity of a natural process, which makes us regard schism with profound suspicion as entailing an impoverishment of the sense of continuity and a narrowing of the field of collective experience, from which the collective spirit is taught and nourished. We find the discussion of brand new syntheses, of religions *à la mode*, of scientific Christianity exceedingly uninteresting; for our civilisation the day of new religions is over. The experiments of the last three centuries are not encouraging. What we need is to continue, purify, widen, and deepen the process that was in possession before these schismatic movements took place. We freely admit that every such schism stands for the emphasis—usually the over-emphasis—of some too neglected aspect of Catholic truth and life, and that till such neglect is manifestly repaired we cannot hope

that the Church's claims will be considered. But we are equally convinced that if it is the Church's duty to make room for all, even at a certain sacrifice of uniformity, it is the duty of all to make reciprocal efforts towards reunion, even at a certain sacrifice of individuality. As for the fruitful friction and competition often alleged in favour of a disunited Christendom, it certainly never was wanting, never could be wanting, in Catholicism as we conceive and desire it, with its natural variety and diversified luxuriance, its forced tolerance and encouragement of every level of spiritual culture.

With our principles, therefore, secession is unthinkable. Besides, what other body could offer us anything that we have not got, or even half that we want? And if the Church offers much more than many of us need, much that we could do without, yet others need it; and we would not have a Church narrowed down to our own individual tastes and notions. Whatever attracts us abroad, we can find at home if we look long enough. To whom, then, should we go? It is only the fantastic notion that we must eat everything on the table that makes the banquet seem burdensome to us.

(xix)

And now if the name is at all new, the thing signified by "liberal Catholicism" is as old as the Church, and is a necessary element of her constitution, a vital condition of her health and progress. We absolutely repudiate the perverse signification which they would fain attach to the term who wish to discredit its bearers and represent them as a sect or party. One might as

well say that "average Catholic" or "indifferent Catholic" was a sectarian term. The name "Liberal" does not qualify the Catholicism of its bearer, but his general outlook on men and life. We ought not to discard it as evil because it is ignorantly associated with political or utilitarian principles, or with a negative and militant attitude towards established order in Church and State. It is English, and not foreign, usage that must determine the sense of English words; and in English a liberal does not mean a rascal. It is only a certain modesty that should forbid a man to profess a liberal Catholicism; for it implies nothing more nor less than the Catholicism of a man of liberal education; of a broad outlook over the world of the past and the present—such an education as delivers a man from parochialism and provincialism of every sort; enables him to enter into the heart and mind of other races, times, religions, and civilisations than his own; to take an outside and objective, as well as an inside and subjective, view of his own special interest or cause, and, while deepening his loyalty and devotion to it, preserves him from bigotry, one-sidedness, and fanaticism. So understood, liberal Catholicism has no necessary connection with a minimising tendency as to doctrine or discipline. What it excludes is the negative, militant, intolerant spirit, whether of orthodoxy or heterodoxy, whether conservative or progressive.

Liberalism of this sort can never be too extreme; we can never have enough of it. It alone can make us conscious of the full depth and complexity of the problems for which the multitude demands, and must have,

sensational, extreme, and apparently simple solutions, one way or the other—the absolutism of authority or the absolutism of freedom, wholesale socialism or wholesale individualism, unqualified credulity or unqualified scepticism. Only by such war-cries is the majority led, and hence Liberal Catholicism is always ignored or suspected by the multitude and its official leaders.

Yet, though never in favour, it is a constant and necessary element in the Church's life, and can claim for its representatives many, if not most, of the great personalities that have stood as landmarks in her history—men whose worth has, in so many cases, but slowly won that public recognition to which their liberalism taught them to be indifferent. Ground between the upper and the nether mill-stone, they have needed to possess their souls in patience. Their comprehensive and tolerant sympathy with warring extremes has won them the dislike of both sides, each of which holds him a cold friend who ventures a good word for its antagonist, or who would slack down the fires of hatred. Sharing as they do, in all sincerity, the faith, they by no means share the opinions or theology of the majority, nor of those who have to control the majority; knowing well that for those truths which are reached by reflection and inference, general consent is the worst possible guide.

Hence they are usually regarded as heterodox by the majority which fails to distinguish between deviations from, and developments of, received doctrinal opinions, and between the truth of theology and the truth of revelation.

But for the most part, the liberal Catholic knows his Church history too well to be moved very greatly by hard words, or even by hard blows, which he finds have been dealt out to his spiritual predecessors with a prodigal recklessness that somewhat robs them of their significance. He does not respect officials less, but rather more, for his clear knowledge of the precise basis, scope, and limitation of their jurisdiction. He does not value the sacraments and outward privileges of a Catholic less, because he recognises that internal is more necessary than external union with the Church, and that "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" is more essential to the soul than even the sacramental bread of life. It is no mere juridical bond to be snapped at the word of an angry bishop that makes him a Catholic, but a massive consciousness of solidarity with the whole Catholic communion, past and present, by whose spirit he is animated, whose beliefs, hopes, aspirations, and sentiments he shares. Recognising the practical deference which is due to the official interpretations of that spirit, and is demanded by the interests of order and discipline, he will use every honest endeavour to conform to such decisions; but should he fail, and should he, without any consciousness of fault, incur juridical excommunication, he will not in his own mind cease to feel himself a Catholic, nor will he suffer any true and inward excommunication so long as he is sincerely convinced of being faithful to a deeper and truer interpretation of the Church's spirit than has yet been reached by the average mind, of which the official Church is the guardian and exponent. Between the deeper and the less deep, the truer and the

less true, there is difference—a difference that may surprise and trouble—but there is not contradiction. Not till he is sensible of such contradiction, not till he feels that he has certainly ceased to be an honest interpreter of the more recondite implications of Catholicism, will he feel himself excommunicated in spirit and in truth.

In conclusion, then, the position of a liberal Catholic, fully informed of the massive indictment that may be preferred against his religion, and lacking neither in intelligence nor in intellectual honesty and detachment, is by no means so inconceivable as would seem to those who confound the cause of Catholicism with that of its popular controversialists; who instead of studying the living organism, study the books that have been written about it. Nor is he the special pleader of a desperate cause, but a true philosopher if—against those who, treating Catholicism as a theory, would show that it cannot live—he treats it as something that does live and has lived, and strives to determine the secrets of its life; if instead of discussing Dogma, Revelation, and Theology as mere notions, he examines them as actual living factors of Catholicism, and searches out the principle of their vitality in the past, in order that it may be saved in some fuller synthesis of the future.

Keenly as he may feel all the pressures and problems of a difficult conformity, he is the last man who can consistently yield to the charm of easy simplifications, intellectual or practical. Life itself, in the measure that we are alive, that we are in it and not out of it, is a ceaseless balancing of conflicting interests, a fierce fight for the unification of experiences that gather more

quickly than we can arrange and adjust them. If then, for the individual and for the race, life itself is an endless problem that cannot be evaded; if all the great warring interests of life—political, social, educational—teem, each in its turn, with interior discords and difficulties, why should religion, why should Catholicism, be an exception? Those who fly to it for simplification are fools; those who fly from it only for that motive are still greater fools. "The cross is always ready and awaits thee everywhere; thou canst not escape it, run where thou wilt," says à Kempis. We leave a serviceable house because the chimneys smoke, and for a time we experience a grateful relief. But presently we find that the new one is damp or ill-drained and, forgetful of smoky flues, we wish ourselves back.

The wedded union between the Church and Society, between religion and culture, is not without endless domestic jars, endless demands on mutual patience. Yet this is no reason for an impossible divorce. The Fathers have long since discovered an image of the Church in Eve, drawn from the side of Adam to be a helpmeet for him, albeit a costing one in many ways. In some respects the Hindu legend of the same event is even more illustrative. It tells us that when the Creator had taxed a million contradictory elements of the universe for contributions which he blended into a new creature and presented to man, the man came to him in eight days and said: "My lord, the creature you gave me poisons my existence. She chatters without rest, she takes all my time, she laments for nothing at all, and is always ill."

And Twashtri received the woman again.

But eight days later the man came again to the god and said:—

"My lord, my life is very solitary since I returned this creature."

And Twashtri returned the woman to him.

Three days only passed, and Twashtri saw the man coming to him again.

"My lord," said he, "I do not understand exactly how, but I am sure the woman causes me more annoyance than pleasure. I beg of you to relieve me of her."

But Twashtri cried: "Go your way and do your best."

And the man cried: "I cannot live with her!"

"Neither can you live without her," replied Twashtri.

And the man was sorrowful, murmuring: "Woe is me! I can neither live with nor without her."

CHAPTER III

LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI

THIS essay appeared in the *The Month* (Nov., 1899), and later in *The Faith of the Millions* (Series I) under the title "The Relation of Theology to Devotion." I reprint it here under a new title, because it is fundamental to all the essays that follow, and to the whole point of view developed in the volumes, *Lex Orandi* and *Lex Credendi*. On re-reading it carefully I am amazed to see how little I have really advanced since I wrote it; how I have simply eddied round and round the same point. It is all here—all that follows—not in germ but in explicit statement—as it were in a brief compendium or analytical index.

Again: it marks a turning-point in my own theological experience. Previously, I had uncritically accepted the more rigid scholastic view of the "Deposit of Faith" as being "Chapter the First" of Catholic theology written by an inspired pen; and in the earlier essays, reprinted in *Faith of the Millions*, had sought to evade the obvious difficulties of that supposition by a liberal use of the theory of doctrinal development. Later, the insufficiencies of such apologetic became so pressing that one was forced to consider whether the "Deposit of Faith" should be viewed as essentially

a "form of sound words" and not rather as a Spirit, or a Principle, or an Idea—a view which would liberate theology and all the sciences with which it is necessarily entangled from bondage to the categories of a past age consecrated by Divine Authority.

Finally it seemed, and still seems to me, that we can reconcile the traditional notion of the "Deposit" as being a "form of sound words" with all the exigencies of mental freedom, by carefully distinguishing Revelation and Theology as generically different orders of Truth and Knowledge; by denying strenuously any sort of development of Revelation or Dogma, such as obtains only in Science and Theology.

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Theology may be used in a wider or a more restricted sense. Here we employ the term to signify what is known as scholastic theology, that is, the essay to translate the teachings of Catholic revelation into the terms and forms of Aristotelian philosophy; and thereby to give them a scientific unity.

Roughly speaking the difference between the philosophical and the vulgar way of conceiving and speaking about things, is that the former is abstract, orderly, and artificial; the latter, concrete, disorderly, and natural. The exigencies of our feeble and limited memory make it necessary for us to classify our experiences into some sort of unity. A library is no use to us unless we can introduce some kind of system or order into its arrangement, and make an intelligible catalogue of its contents. We can consider the order of size, or of subject, or of authors and titles taken alphabetically, or of date

of publication; or taking any of these as the first class-note, we can employ the others for subdivision. We do not invent these orders, but we find them; and so when we map out the world into categories, we do not invent but recognise one or other of these arrangements that things admit of. We can, however, classify the books, not only in our mind or in a catalogue, but also in our library; we can even classify Nature in our museums; but the world at large refuses to be harnessed to our categories, and goes its own rude unscientific way. Now who will deny that a natural-history museum does truly represent Nature? that under a certain aspect one who has studied Nature there, knows more about her than he who has lived all his life in the woods? But only under a certain aspect is this true. For such a presentation of Nature is abstract and negatively unreal. Beetles do not march the fields in such logically ordered phalanxes; nor do they wear pins thrust through their middles; nor are birds' eyes made of glass, or their viscera of sawdust, or their muscles of wire. A visitor from some other creation who knew no more of our world than that, would think it a very simple affair; very easy to remember and to retail. Still how little would he know of its reality compared with a denizen of the backwoods! Yet if our backwoods-man could be educated scientifically in such a museum, he would receive almost a new power of vision, a power of observing and recognising and remembering order where before he had only seen chaos. And in this lies the great advantage of abstract and scientific consideration; of precisions that are unreal; of suppositions that are impossible. Only by these devices can we digest our

experience piecemeal, which else would remain in confused unsorted masses. But the more abstract, general, and simple our classification is, and the further removed it is from the infinite complexity of concrete reality, the more we need continually to remind ourselves that its truth is merely hypothetical, and holds only in the abstract. This is what the earlier political economists (for example) forgot, when they drew many conclusions that were perfectly irrefutable, on the purely abstract supposition that man's sole motive is the desire to make money; but that were altogether false in the concrete real world where thousands of other motives complicate the problem.

It must further be noticed that on the whole the backwoods-man has a truer knowledge of Nature than a mere acquaintance with a science-manual could ever impart. Both kinds of knowledge are in their own way lamentably imperfect; the one through indistinctness and confusion; the other through unreality and poverty of content. Yet it is less misleading to take a confused, general view of an object, than to view one of its parts or elements violently divorced from the rest. The rudest clown knows better what man is, than would some being who should know nothing but the articulation of the human skeleton—true as this latter knowledge would be as far as it went.

It is clear then that, as far as the natural world is concerned, what is scientifically true in the abstract, may be practically false in the concrete. But when we are dealing with the spiritual and supernatural world, we are under a further disadvantage; for we can think and speak of it only in analogous terms borrowed from

this world of our sensuous experience, and with no more exactitude than when we would express music in terms of colour, or colour in terms of music. So far as the most abstract and ultimate ideas of our philosophy prescind from all sensible determinations of being, and deal with the merest outline and empty framework of thought, they may have some literal value in the supersensible world. We can say: This, that, or the other follows necessarily from the principles of metaphysics, and is therefore as true as those principles are. But it is not the whole truth; and indeed the more abstract and general are the terms under which a thing is known, the less do we know about it. A comparatively concrete idea like Man or King gives us a mine of information about the subject of which it is predicated; whereas Being, Substance, Cause, give us the very minimum of information. Now the terms that are in any sense common to the world of our experience and to the world beyond it, are, from the nature of the case, the most barren and shadowy of all. If, *e.g.*, we look at Porphyry's tree where "substance" bifurcates into "material substance" and "spiritual substance," the former branch develops and subdivides down to the real and particular, but the latter breaks off abruptly and leaves us in the dark as to all its concrete determinations. For all reason tells us, we know nothing of angels except what can be deduced *a priori* from the general idea of non-material substance. To our imagination they are utterly characterless and uninteresting beings; quite different from the Saints, of whom we can sometimes feel the individuality in spite of their biographers.

Granted then all that the most exacting metaphysician might claim, any non-analogous ideas we can form of the other world are necessarily of the thinnest and most uninstructive description, and it is only by liberal recourse to analogy that we can put any flesh on their bare ribs. Whatever shred of truth they convey to us may, or rather must, like all half-evidence, get an entirely different complexion from the additional mass of truth that is hid from us. When, however, we begin to supplement by use of analogy, and (*e.g.*) to cover the bare notion of a First Cause by clothing it with all the excellences of creation, multiplied to infinity, purified of their limitations, and fused into one simple perfection, then we must frankly own that we are trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to equal a sphere to a plane. In saying this, we do not deny for a moment, that the infinite can to some extent be expressed in terms of the finite ; but are only insisting on the purely analogous character of such expression. Nor again are we denying the utility, or even the necessity, of such an endeavour ; for we should be forced equally to deny the use of all scientific, as opposed to vulgar, modes of conception ; whereas these two modes check and supplement one another.

It is a received principle of scholasticism that the "connatural" object of the human mind is this material world which is presented to our senses ; and that we are forced to think of everything else, even of our own soul, in the terms of that world. Hence all our "explanations" of spiritual activity are, however disguisedly, mechanical at root ; thought is a kind of photography or portraiture ; free-will a sort of weighing process ; the

soul itself, so far as it is not described negatively, is described in terms of body. Having a direct intuitive knowledge of these spiritual operations we can be, and should be, conscious that our explanations of them are inadequate and analogous. Still more when we try to explain that world inferred from, but beyond, experience, internal or external, ought we to be on our guard lest we forget the merely analogous character of our thought. The error called "anthropomorphism" does not lie so much in thinking and speaking of God human-wise—for that we are constrained to do by the structure of our minds—as in forgetting that such a mode of conception is analogous. The chief use of metaphysic or natural theology lies in the fact—not that it gives us any more comprehensible idea of God—but that it impresses upon us the necessary inadequacy of our human way of regarding Him. Neither the metaphysical nor the vulgar idea is adequate, though taken together they correct one another; but taken apart, it may be said that the vulgar is the less unreal of the two. To illustrate this from nearer and simpler cases: The peasant thinks of his soul as a filmy replica of self interfused with his body; as co-extended with it, part answering to part; but the philosopher will tell him that the soul is present "wholly in the whole body, and wholly in each several part." But this latter statement has no real value, save so far as it insists that the peasant's view is only equivalent and not literal truth—that is, so far as it is a repudiation of anthropomorphism. What does it tell us as to the real mode of presence? That the truth lies unassignably between two erroneous extremes; first, that the soul is, as the peasant conceives

it, interfused co-extensively with the body; secondly, that it is concentrated in every point of the body. There are certain advantages attached to either mode of presence; but these two modes, though incompatible for extended substances, are in some way combined in a spiritual substance, not literally, but as far as the practical advantage of them is concerned. The vulgar notion would deprive the spirit of some of its excellence, and would create many difficulties if not recognised as inadequate and anthropomorphic. Similarly, if the philosopher forgets that he has only determined the *locus* of truth, the extremes between which it lies inaccessibly; if he thinks that he has got to more than its practical equivalent, or has got any proper non-analogous notion of spiritual substance and presence, he may wake to find that, in combining two incompatible ideas, he has got zero for his result.

The same is to be said of our conception of the Divine omnipresence:

> Out beyond the shining of the furthest star
> Thou Thyself art stretching infinitely far,
> Nature cannot hold Thee, earth is all too strait
> For Thy endless glory and Thy royal state.

This is the common, human way of viewing the matter; but the philosopher sees at once that it "negates" a certain perfection or advantage to be found in concentrated, "punctual" presence; and that all such advantages, however incompatible with any mode of being familiar to us, must be realised in God. Hence he insists on this latter as well; saying, at the same time, that God is not referable to space as an extension or a point might be, but in some way quite

inconceivable in itself, though conceivable as to its advantages. The effect of such an explanation on the common mind will often be that God is not everywhere, as hitherto supposed, but nowhere; not far, indeed, yet not near; not distant, yet not present. Again, eternity, to the peasant, means time without end, century upon century, *per omnia sæcula sæculorum:* the divine life, like our own, drags on, part after part, experience upon experience. God is the "Ancient of Days," lined and wrinkled with æonian cares. But to remove the limitations involved in such a conception, the philosopher tells us that God's life is *tota simul*, all gathered up into an indivisible *now*, into the imaginary crack that divides one second of time from another. As before, he tells us to take these two extreme errors together; and without attempting to fuse them, to hold them side by side in the mind, confident that the truth lies indefinably between them. And so far he does well. But if he thinks that these two assertions can be combined into a direct expression of the truth, he will come to the conclusion that God is in no way referable to time; and so miss that half-truth which the peasant apprehends.

Thus the use of philosophy lies in its insisting on the inadequacy of the vulgar statement; its abuse, in forgetting the inadequacy of its own, and thereby falling into a far more grievous error than that which it would correct.[1]

[1] It is curious to find the same lesson inculcated in a very different school, but in a parallel connection. Speaking of the attempts of metaphysics to describe the Absolute in negations, Professor Andrew Seth (*Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 218) asks: "What is the inevitable effect upon the mind of this cluster of negations? Surely it will be this: Either the Absolute will be regarded as a mere unknowable with which we have

It is a fact that the Judæo-Christian revelation has been communicated in vulgar and not in philosophical terms and modes of thought. The Old Testament seems frankly anthropomorphic from the first; God lives, thinks, feels, acts under limitations, differing only in degree from our own; and it would almost seem as if the Incarnation were timed to counteract the weakening of religion, incident to the more abstract and philosophic theology of later ages. Men are influenced directly through their imagination and their emotions; and only remotely through their abstract ideas. In the measure that God is dehumanised by philosophy, He becomes unreal and ineffectual in regard to our life and

no concern; or the denial of will, intellect, morality, personality, beauty, and truth" [*i.e.*, the denial of these attributes in their experienced forms and with their finite limitations and distinctness] "will be taken to mean that the Absolute is an unity indifferent to these higher aspects of experience. It will be regarded as non-personal and impersonal in the sense of being below these distinctions; and our Absolute will then remarkably resemble the soulless substance of the materialist. Nothing is more certain than that extremes meet in this fashion; and that the attempt to reach the superhuman falls back into the infra-human. Now Mr. Bradley, of course, intends his unity to be a higher, not a lower unity. 'The Absolute is not personal, because it is personal and more. It is, in a word, super-personal.' But he is not blind to the dangers that lurk in his denials. 'It is better,' he even warns us, if there is risk of falling back upon the lower unity, 'to affirm personality than to call the Absolute impersonal.' But there is more than a risk, I maintain; there is a certainty that this will be the result. . . . Our statements about the Absolute . . . are actually nearer the truth when they give up the pretence of literal exactitude, and speak in terms (say) of morality and religion, applying to it the characteristics of our own highest experience. Such language recognizes itself in general (or at least, it certainly should recognize itself) as possessing only symbolical truth—as being, in fact, 'thrown out,' as Matthew Arnold used to say, as a vast reality. But both religion and the higher poetry—just because they give up the pretence of an impossible exactitude—carry us, I cannot doubt, nearer to the meaning of the world, than the formulæ of an abstract metaphysics."

conduct. God has revealed Himself, not to the wise and prudent, not to the theologian or the philosopher, but to babes, to fishermen, to peasants, to the *profanum vulgus*, and therefore He has spoken their language, leaving it to the others to translate it (at their own risk) into forms more acceptable to their taste. The Church's guardianship in the matter is to preserve, not to develop, the exact ideas which that simple language conveyed to its first hearers, knowing well that those human ideas and thought-forms are indefinitely inadequate to the eternal realities which they shadow forth. "This is My Body"—what did these words mean for Peter and Andrew and the rest; that is all she inquires about. What does she care about the metaphysics of transubstantiation, except so far as metaphysicians have to be answered in their own language, and on their own assumptions? If she says the soul is the "form" of the body, it is not that she has a revelation of philosophy to communicate, but because the question is asked by a hylomorphist; and it is the nearest way the truth can be put to him.

This "deposit" of faith, this concrete, coloured, imaginative expression of Divine mysteries, as it lay in the mind of the first recipients, is both the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi;* it is the rule and corrective, both of popular devotion and of rational theology. Devotion tends to become more and more anthropomorphic and forgetful of the inadequacy of revelation, and thus to run into puerilities and superstitions. Philosophical theology tends to the other extreme of excessive abstraction and vague unreality. The Church, by ever recalling them to the original rule of tradition, pre-

serves the balance between them and makes them help one another. Just as experience is the test and check of those scientific hypotheses, by which we try to classify, unite, and explain experience; so revelation is the test and check of all philosophical attempts to unify and elucidate its contents. We do not, of course, mean that popular devotions are to dictate to theology, but that theology together with them, must be brought to the test of primitive revelation as interpreted by the Church. Any rationalist explanation that would make prayer nonsensical, or would encourage laxity, or would make havoc of the ordinary sane and sensible religious notions of the faithful, is *eo ipso* condemned as not squaring with facts. So far, for example, as the philosophical conception of God's independence tends to create an impression that He is not pleased with our love, or grieved by our sin, it is opposed to revelation, which says: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit"; or "My Spirit will not alway strive with man"; and which everywhere speaks of God, and therefore wants us to think of God, as subject to passions like our own. And in so thinking of God, we think inadequately no doubt, but we are far less inadequate than were we to think of Him as passionless and indifferent. The one conception paralyses as the other stimulates devotion. Again, if the philosophical explanation of God's working in our will creates an impression fatal to the sense of liberty and responsibility, it is so far counter to revelation; and no less so is any explanation of our liberty which would take the reins out of God's hands, or make Divine foreknowledge impossible. Here obviously is a case where philosophy shoots aslant the truth, first on

one side and then on the other; and can never strike it fair, but commends to us the paradox: "Watch, as though all depended on watching; and pray, as though all depended on praying." Again, predestination and foreknowledge are doctrines destructive of religious energy, as soon as we forget their abstract and merely scientific character; but revelation plainly intends us to go on as though God knew as little of the future as we do, and were waiting for events to develop, before fixing our doom. "Oh, did I but know that I should persevere," cried à Kempis, puzzled with the theology of predestination and trying to look at things as God sees them. "Do now, what thou wouldst do if thou didst know, and thou shalt be very safe," was the answer. Rational theology is in some sense an attempt to look at things back-before, in a non-human, non-natural way; and it is justified in this endeavour only so far as it tends to cure us of our terrestrial "provincialism"; but it is not wonderful that to us things so viewed should seem distorted and unreal, the moment we forget that its use is mainly corrective—that it is medicine and not food.

To come to more distinctively Christian beliefs, we have examples in the Trinity and Incarnation, of the inability of the human mind to strike a truth fair in the centre, and of its need of seemingly contrary and complementary expressions of inaccessible ideas. The simple believer can successively affirm that in God there are three Persons, and that in God there is one Nature. He can even know that what is not simultaneously verifiable of creatures, may be verifiable of the Creator in some higher sense as yet unsuspected;

that the truth lies midway between what he means by one person and what he means by three persons. But let the theologian begin to explain "nature," and "person," and to insist on his mentally putting together, in one whole, assertions hitherto held as true but irreconcilable parts; and the chances are that one or other of these parts will be sacrificed in the vain effort to secure a forced harmony.

But more particularly it is in relation to the Incarnation and its attendant mysteries, that it is important to remember the abstract character of certain theological conclusions, and the superiority of the concrete language of revelation as a guide to truth. The whole doctrine of Christ's κένωσις or self-emptying, can be explained in a minimising way almost fatal to devotion, and calculated to rob the Incarnation of all its helpfulness by leaving the ordinary mind with something perilously near the phantasmal Christ of the Docetans. Christ, we are truly taught to believe, laid aside by a free act all those prerogatives which were His birthright as the God-Man, that He might not be better off than we who have to win our share in that glory through humiliation and suffering; that He might be a High Priest touched with a feeling for our infirmities, tempted as we in all points, sin only excepted. Yet when the theologian has finished his treatise: *De Scientia Christi;* when he has impressed upon us that Christ was exempt from the two internal sources of all our temptations, *sc.*, the darkness of our mind and the rebellion of our body; that in His case, temptations from without met with no more response from within, than when we offer food to a corpse; we cannot help feeling that under whatever

abstraction this may be true, yet it cannot be the whole truth, unless all who have turned to Christ in their temptations and sorrows have been woefully deluded—unless the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi* are strangely at strife. Also when we are told that Christ's Sacramental Body is not referred to space *ratione sui*, but only *ratione accidentis;* that it is not moved when the species are carried in procession; that we are not nearer to it at the altar than at the North Pole; we can only say that this "*ratione sui*" consideration does not concern us, nor is it any part of God's revelation. It does well to remind us that our Lord's Body is not to be thought of carnally and grossly; that our natural imagination of this mystery is necessarily childish and inadequate. But it does not give us a more, but if anything, a less adequate conception of it. "This is My Body" is nearer the mark than metaphysics can ever hope to come; and of the two superstitions, that of the peasant who is too literally anthropomorphic, is less than that of the philosopher who should imagine his part of the truth to be the whole.

Again, what is called the Hidden Life of our Lord in the Sacrament, is a thought upon which the faith and devotion of many saints and holy persons has fed itself for centuries; yet it is one with which a narrow metaphysics plays havoc very disastrously. The notion of the loneliness, the sorrows, and disappointments of the neglected Prisoner of Love in the tabernacle may be crude and simple; but it is assuredly nearer the truth than the notion of a now passionless and apathetic Christ, who suffered these things by foresight two thousand years ago, and whose irrevocable pains cannot

possibly be increased or lessened by any conduct of ours. I have more than once known all the joy and reality taken out of a life that fed on devotion to the Sacramental Presence, by such a flash of theological illumination; and have seen Magdalens left weeping at empty tombs and crying: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

There is perhaps a tendency on the part of schoolmen to delight in disconcerting the minds of others by a display of rare and esoteric knowledge, especially of such knowledge as owes its rarity to its abstraction and its remoteness from the wholesome concrete reality of things, and which offers to minds more acute than deep a quicker road to distinction than the laborious and humbling path of general education. But after all, destructive work does not demand much genius, nor does it need more than the merest smattering of bad logic and worse metaphysics, to be able to represent the beliefs of simple devotion in a ridiculous light, and to pull down in a moment what the labour of years cannot build up again. Even if vanity be not the motive, yet a well-meant but ill-judged desire to pluck up tares whose root-fibres are tangled with those of the wheat, will often issue in the same disaster.

This, of course, is not the use, but the abuse of theology; it is the result of a "little learning," which, in unskilful hands, is the most dangerous of all weapons.

The first effect produced upon the believing mind by departing from the childlike concrete presentment of Divine truth as put before us in revelation, is undoubtedly disconcerting and uncomfortable, like every other process of transition from one resting-place to

another; and those who have not strength to carry the process through, are often injured spiritually by their inability either to go back to the older forms, or to go forward far enough to find anything as satisfying; and these are just the people who, in the spirit of the tailless fox, delight in communicating their unrest to others.

But a deeper and more comprehensive theology seems in most cases to bring us back to our original point of departure, albeit on a higher plane; to restore to us the stimulus of our childlike conceptions, not only fully, but superabundantly; and to convince us almost experimentally, that God's way of putting the truth was, after all, the better and the wiser.

What, for example, is the purport of the Incarnation, but to reveal to us the Father, so far as the Divine goodness can be expressed in the terms of a human life? to bring home to our imagination and emotion those truths about God's fatherhood and love, which are so unreal to us in their philosophic or theological garb? To say that love and sorrow, joy and anger, exist in God *eminenter*, purified from their imperfections, identified with one another, is for us, and as far as any effectual idea is concerned, the same as telling us that they do not really exist in God at all. There is in Him, we are told, something that equals their perfection; but then, what that something is we do not and cannot know. But the Incarnation assures us that whatever consoles and helps us in our simpler anthropomorphic conception of God, is not more, but far less than the truth. As soon as the Divine love becomes capable of a human exhibition, as soon as it translates itself into mortal language, it is seen to be, *at least*, a suffering,

grieving, passionate, pitiful love; we are shown that practically to deny these characteristics to the Eternal is a far greater error than practically to attribute them.

Even if, in some non-natural metaphysical sense, the Sacred Humanity suffers nothing in the sacramental state, yet what would such suffering avail except to reveal to us the transcendental suffering of the Divinity, and its yearning for men's souls? If the thirst of Calvary is over and gone, was not its chief end to assure us of the reality of the eternal thirst and passion of God which there found but a finite and halting utterance? "For the same thirst," says Juliana[1] of Norwich, "that He had upon the rood-tree (which desire and longing and thirst, as to my sight, was in Him from without beginning), the same hath He yet, and shall have unto the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to His bliss. For as truly as there is a property in God of ruth and pity; as verily there is in God a property of thirst and longing."

[1] Elsewhere, explaining that all contrition and holy sorrow in our soul is *from* God, and therefore must be more excellently *in* God, whose Spirit it is in us which *postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus* (Romans viii. 26), she writes: "He abideth us moaning and mourning. Which meaneth, that all the true feeling that we have in ourself in contrition and in compassion; and all moaning and mourning for that we are not united with our Lord, and such as is profitable—it is Christ, in us. And though some of us feel it seldom, it passeth never from Christ till what time He have brought us out of all our woe. For Love suffereth Him never to be without pity. And what time we fall into sin and leave the mind of Him and the keeping of our own soul, then beareth Christ alone all the charge of us. And thus standeth He moaning and mourning. . . . And that time I be strange to Him by sin, despair, or sloth, then I let my Lord stand alone, inasmuch as He is in me." (*Rev.* xvi.) All this is no mere concession to devout fancy, but a far nearer, though still defective, approach to the truth than the metaphysics of theology can pretend to.

What does the revelation of Christ's human heart import except so far as it brings home, as it were, to our very senses, the truth that Love is the core, the very central attribute of the Divinity round which all the other attributes cluster, from which they spring, on which they depend; that blood and water, guilt and remission, death and life, evil and good, darkness and light, both, stream from and return to the same fountain; both manifest one and the same goodness, and owe their seeming difference and colouring to the narrowness and imperfection of our weak faithless vision? And even if the Eucharist were no more than the bare remembrance of Calvary, it should speak to us principally not of that past human passion, but of the present Divine passion whereof Calvary was but the symbol. But in truth, a better conception of the unreality of time before the Divine mind, will convince us that the simple devotion which regards God's passion as continually present, as augmented by our sins, as alleviated by our love, is less inadequate and more philosophically true than the shallowly rationalistic view. For it is only the merciful fading of our memory that prevents our whole past being co-present to us. To God it is (and was from eternity) as though the nails were at this moment being driven through His hands.

Similarly with regard to all other pseudo-philosophic difficulties we have alluded to, we may say: *Lex orandi est lex credendi.* The saints have always prayed to a God, conceived human-wise, albeit with the consciousness of the imperfection of even God's own self-chosen mode of revelation, and it is this consciousness that has

saved them from superstition and anthropomorphism. We say "the saints," beause purity of heart is the safeguard against superstition. It is the desire to "exploit" religion, to bribe the Almighty, to climb up by some other way, rather than go through the one door of self-denial, that is the source of all corruption.

The "deposit" of faith is not merely a symbol or creed, but it is a concrete religion left by Christ to His Church; it is perhaps in some sense more directly a *lex orandi* than a *lex credendi;* the creed is involved in the prayer, and has to be disentangled from it; and formularies are ever to be tested and explained by the concrete religion which they formulate. Not every devotion of Catholics is a Catholic devotion, and the Church needs to exercise her authority continually in checking the tendency to extravagate, and in applying and enforcing the original *lex orandi.* In this work she is helped by a wise and temperate theology. But theology is not always wise and temperate; and has itself often to be brought to the *lex orandi* test. It has to be reminded that, like science, its hypotheses, theories, and explanations, must square with facts—the facts here being the Christian religion as lived by its consistent professors. If certain forms of prayer and devotion are undoubtedly Catholic, no theology that proves them unreal or ridiculous can be sound. If any analysis of the act of faith or of charity or of contrition, would make such acts seem exceedingly difficult to realise, we know at once the analysis must be faulty, since the simplest and most ignorant Catholics make such acts easily and abundantly. If any theology of grace or predestination or of the sacraments would

make men pray less, or watch less, or struggle less; then we may be perfectly sure that such theology is wrong. Devotion and religion existed before theology, in the way that art existed before art-criticism; reasoning, before logic; speech, before grammar. Art-criticism, as far as it formulates and justifies the best work of the best artists, may dictate to and correct inferior workmen; and theology, as far as it formulates and justifies the devotion of the best Catholics, and as far as it is true to the life of faith and charity as actually lived, so far is it a law and corrective for all. But when it begins to contradict the facts of that spiritual life, it loses its reality and its authority; and needs itself to be corrected by the *lex orandi.*

CHAPTER IV

SEMPER EADEM (I)

THE following review of Mr. Wilfrid Ward's *Problems and Persons* was intended not to solve but to state the apparent dilemma raised by the conception of the Deposit of Faith as a body of theological doctrines and statements from which other statement might be deduced syllogistically. Either the whole process of theological and scientific development is held down to the categories of that statement and practically paralysed; or the patristic and traditional notion of the Deposit as a "form of sound words" must be abandoned altogether in favour of the notion that it is a Spirit, or Idea, or a perpetuated experience to be expressed by each generation in its own way, but having no sacred or classical form of expression. It seemed to me that Mr. Ward had not grasped this dilemma; that the "development" admitted by scholastic theology had nothing but the name in common with the "development" of science, and could form no basis of reconciliation between the two; that as long as he admitted or did not deny that the Deposit of Faith was the first chapter of Theology, Mr. Ward's logical place was with the scholastics and not with the liberals—in short, that he had sought but

had not found a *via media* between scholastic theology and science—between the old theology and the new.

My own solution is hinted at in the concluding paragraphs, where I suggest that the sacred "form of sound words" may have other than theological value; that its categories are eternalised merely as illustrative of that other value; and not as philosophically or scientifically valid. I was not yet clear enough to say more; and certainly the distinction between revelation and theology is not merely that between figurative and exact statements of the same truth—a distinction which would give a preference to theology as the underlying substance of revelation, and would land us again in the dilemma we were trying to escape. I had not yet seen that Revelation is not a record, metaphorical or otherwise, of a supernatural experience, but a persistent part or element of such an experience. Nor had I yet realised the difference between biological and spiritual development, and the fallacy of explaining the higher in terms of the lower.

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It is with the Problems rather than with the Persons dealt with in Mr. Ward's collected essays that I propose to occupy myself.[1]

These problems are reducible to one, that, namely, of effecting a reconciliation between theology and science, meaning by science the rest of the field of knowledge so far as it has been unified and systematised by the labour of contemporary investigation and reflection. But in so far as the task has already been carried out to

[1] *Problems and Persons.* By Wilfrid Ward. Longmans, 1903.

some extent by religious thinkers outside the Church, who, unfettered by the obligations of Catholic dogma, have given us a purely scientific or liberal theology possessing a sort of generic identity under many varieties, we may state our problem more conveniently as that of reconciling whatever may be reasonable in the claims of this liberal theology with the requirements of Catholic theology.

This problem has been created by the comparatively conservative, or even intransigent, attitude of theology during the period in which the other sections of human thought have, more or less uniformly, passed with ever accelerated rapidity through various phases of progress; the result being that sacred and secular science have gradually ceased to understand one another, to affect one another, or to realise that at least as parts of the totality of life and knowledge they have interests in common, and are mutually impoverished by their antagonism.

If in earlier times each generation witnessed some sort of quarrel between theology and speculation; to-day, owing to the rate of scientific and historical advance, we have a more wholesale problem to cope with; we witness more change in a decade than many a century has seen in the past. Reflection, once underfed by experience, is now surfeited beyond its powers of healthy digestion.

Nothing has more contributed to this surfeiting in our own day than the application, by way of analogy, of the theory of biological evolution to the spiritual or rational life of man. The science of evolution has suggested the evolution of science, of language, of art, of

religion, of theology, of social and political institutions. All are now viewed dynamically, as processes. It is the law of their growth that matters, not the analysis or definition of their present stage of expansion. A "scientific" knowledge no longer means a mere understanding of the formal, material, efficient, and final causes, but an orderly, historical understanding of connected origins and developments; it means tracing all life back to the first perceptible microscopic germ in which it becomes visible out of the darkness of the unknowable.

The notion that religions, creeds, and beliefs, like everything else, are growths, conflicts rudely with their all but universal claim to a miraculously supernatural origin through divine revelation; it conflicts with "the old supposition as to the fixity of theology,"—"a fixed theology viewed as final, with no thought either of its sources or of its possible future modifications."[1]

Between the claims of such a theology to dictate to science, and those of science to dictate to theology, Mr. Ward, a true disciple of Newman, hopes to find some *via media*. "To believe then in the Christian revelation," he writes,[2] "and to believe that it is a salutary check on the anti-theological extravagances of the men of science, and yet to believe in the methods of modern science and criticism and to see in them a salutary check to the excursions of theologians beyond their province—is not this a tenable *via media?*"

We are to believe in the fact of a divine revelation, an abrupt extra-natural intervention analogous to those which presumably bridge over the gulfs dividing dead

[1] P. xi. [2] P. 102.

matter from living; senseless from sentient life; and this, from human life. This fact of revelation, duly proved of course, the scientist must accept as one of the data of his problem, not to be ignored on account of *a priori* difficulty.

But with the scientists, we are to believe that theology is a growth governed by the usual laws of mental development—a development of the formless theology of the first followers of Christ; that it is *semper eadem* only in substance, not in form; and that the function of the sane, as opposed to the extravagant theologian who would paint St. Peter with a tiara, is to criticise these developments by the original rule of faith, to reject such as are spurious; to approve, foster, and elaborate such as are legitimate. The result would be a theology encumbered by no greater scientific difficulty than is involved in the admission of the initial miraculous intervention by which Christianity was created.

Now Mr. Ward contends "that there is abundant room already provided by acknowledged theological principles" for such developments in Scholastic theology as an assimilation or at least a toleration of the results and methods of modern science would demand. "The fault in the more conservative theologians has been (if my contention is true) that they have not seen the full capabilities of their own principles, but have identified their utmost reach with the very limited application of them which past circumstances have demanded."[1] He recurs several times to the Church's assimilation of the once dreaded Aristotelianism as a crucial instance among many proving that practi-

[1] P. xviii.

cally or by implication the Church has admitted the principle of development before ever it reached distinct formulation. He can even find such a formulation of it as might reasonably be looked for in that age, in the *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lerins, side by side with and qualifying the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*

The prominence and growing credit which Newman's great name has of late years given to the principle of doctrinal development makes it important in the interests of truth to subject to a searching and perfectly detached criticism this suggested possibility of finding in it a *via media* between the two extremes (or extravagances) of theological intransigence and scientific absolutism—between the Scylla of the old theology and the Charybdis of the new. Should any one, in consequence, see reason to suspend his judgment for the present, he will not thereby commit himself to either extreme in hesitating to trust himself to the path indicated. He may believe that there is a *via media*, yet question whether he has really found it, or defined its exact course.

The test of a middle position, which takes something from both extremes, is whether these elements naturally attract and integrate one another, blending in some higher combination; whether they are not as oil and water violently shaken together to separate instantly as soon as the vessel is at rest. Can it be shown that there is any *via media* to be looked for through the doctrine of development (common to science and theology), which shall not be a syncretion of incompatible principles in virtue of one of which we should, in

all consistence, go to the extreme right; and in virtue of the other, to the extreme left; which shall not keep us in the middle merely by confusing us; which shall give us rest otherwise than on a rack, that at one and the same time drags us with equal stress in opposite directions?

We must see, then, whether what seems an excess of conservatism on the part of scholastic theology be really separable from that measure of conservatism which we must justify; and similarly whether the excesses of liberal or purely critical theology can be pruned away without fatal results to its governing principles and methods.

Let us then briefly compare or contrast the two systems, and see whether they can in any way be reconciled and "come to terms"; whether by way of amalgamation, or by the absorption of one by the other, or by some amicable *modus vivendi.*

Scholastic theology occupies itself about the "deposit of faith" as its principal object. By this it understands a certain body of divine knowledge revealed supernaturally to the Apostles and delivered by them under the form of certain categories, ideas, and images, to their immediate successors. This formulated revelation is the *depositum fidei.* It was not as though the tabernacle doors of the heavens, thrown open to the Apostles, were to remain so for ever. What the Apostles saw they recorded and formulated. To their followers they transmitted the record; not the privilege of direct vision. Although many of the truths of the Christian faith are coincident with those of "Natural Religion," or even of Sacred History, yet both on

account of their organic connection with those principal mysteries (the Trinity and the Incarnation) which lie altogether beyond reason, and on account of the manner in which they are communicated to us, they may be considered as organic parts of one and the same supernatural revelation. Here, on the very threshold of our inquiry, we encounter a radical and I think irreconcilable difference between scholastic and liberal theology—between the old and the new. For the realities dealt with are, in the case of the former confessedly *beyond*, and in that of the latter *within* the experience of all men. The teachings of the latter can, those of the former cannot, be brought directly to the test of experience, of comparison between ideas and things. If the heavens, once opened to the Apostles, remained open for every baptised Christian; if the same revelation, and not merely the record of that revelation, were given to each of us as to them, then we should need no *depositum fidei*, no divinely authorised standard of expression; we should be comparatively indifferent to the efforts of past ages to formulate that vision; they would be to us as men's first savage attempts to formulate Nature—the earlier the worse. But it is rather as though centuries ago men had been struck blind and partially paralysed, and as if our knowledge of Nature depended on what was handed down to us from the date of that calamity. How carefully we should have to treasure up the mental forms of that precious tradition and see that the fluctuations of language did not lead us to misinterpret the experience-values of its original terms! That which is *semper idem*, constantly the same under

all developments and accretions, is in the case of scholastic theology a doctrine, a record of an experience gone, never to be repeated, preserved for us only in and through that doctrine. Just because that experience cannot be repeated, it is all important to preserve, if not the exact words, yet the exact sense and meaning which the record had for the minds of those to whom it was first delivered by the Apostles; to represent to ourselves just what it represented to them. Thus the ideas, categories, and symbols which constitute this representation are of the very substance of the *depositum fidei;* if there is a contingent and accidental element it must be looked for merely in the language, in the verbal signs that stand for these ideas.

The "constant," the *semper idem* of liberal theology, on the other hand, is the reality dealt with, and not any doctrine, or representation of that reality. It deals with those ever-present evidences of God in Nature and in the universal religious experiences of mankind which are accessible to all, at all times, and by which all theories and doctrines as to the origin, nature, and end of these experiences can be experimentally tested. Taking "Nature" in the most comprehensive sense, liberal theology is a branch of the science of Nature. It is the old "Natural Theology" enriched and improved by an application of the inductive historical and experimental method to the religions of mankind. Nature is always there to be studied and formulated, and is not given us only by tradition from a privileged past generation. Tradition and co-operation are indeed requisite for the development of a science of Nature, but not for the preservation of its object. Our interest in the crude

science of the remote past is not reverential but historical; we test present results not by their agreement with that primitive science, but by their agreement with Nature.

From this radical difference in the ultimate objects of their study—in the one case a certain class of natural experiences; in the other, a record of past supernatural experiences—flows another affecting the manner of growth and development in liberal and in scholastic theology severally.

In the study of Nature (or of any particular department of natural experience, like that of natural religion), so far as that study is one and continuous through long tradition and wide co-operation (so far, namely, as it is virtually the work of a permanent society and represents the growth of its collective mind), we expect to find and do find a true development of doctrine, following analogously and *mutatis mutandis* the laws of biological development. The first conceptions and generalisations are childlike, and naïvely anthropomorphic; and between these and the latest scientific advances there is a certain thread of continuity—not merely that of historic succession; nor that of reference to the same object or reality, but that of a growing truthfulness, a diminishing inadequacy. The earliest is to the latest as is the germ to the more or less developed organism; this has grown out of that; that has grown into this. Now, though stages of the same process, the germ and the organism are not the same thing: a hen is not an egg; is not even the chicken that was, except so far as we recognise there some absolute unchanged, undeveloped identity of soul or consciousness. What is

there thus identical in the sapling of a century ago and the oak of to-day? Neither stuff nor fashion. Each stage of development dies into the next; ceases in favour of the next. Our science is "the same" as that of our ancestors only by descent and as part of the same growth of the collective mind. Thus in the department of natural religion it is not hard to trace the roads by which religious reason has often passed, in its conceptions of divinity, from grossly anthropomorphic polytheism, to the purest monotheism. Yet these doctrines are in no plain sense "the same"; they are doctrines about the same thing, but they are not the same doctrine; the latter does not contain the former as a constant nucleus amid explanatory or decorative accretions, but simply supplants and discards it. The former persists as little as the caterpillar does in the butterfly—which is not merely a winged caterpillar.

When liberal theology speaks of doctrinal or scientific development it is always in this sense. As Judaism had to die into the Gospel and be abolished, so, it conceives, the theology of one age must always be supplanted by that of the next. It looks back on its own past as a man does on his childhood—not with contempt or severity, but as on something that had to be gone through and left behind for the sake of the present, much as Chemistry, Physiology or Biology look back with a sort of dilettante curiosity to their conjectural origins in the darkness of the past.

But this comparative indifference to the doctrinal forms and categories of the past is out of the question in the case of Scholastic theology, whose principal subject-matter is the record of an ancient and never-to-

be-repeated revelation of supernatural and inaccessible realities—realities, therefore, which cannot be consulted in order to determine the precise sense of that record, the precise degree of its inadequacies; for they are known to us only representatively; only in and through that record. To speak of the hidden realities as the "substance," and of the record as the "form" of revelation, is misleading if it is meant to imply that we can in some degree be indifferent to the latter, if only we hold by the former. This is true for liberal theology, which can get at its object directly; not for Scholastic theology, which can only get at the representation or record of its object.

It follows at once that it is a matter of life and death for Scholastic theology, *custodire depositum*, to hold fast to its primitive record, if not to the very words, at least to the very ideas, symbols, and categories, in which the Christian revelation has been given to it. Inadequate though the representation of eternity in the language of time must necessarily be, yet we have no means of comparing it with its original, of defining the limits of inadequacy, of sundering substantials from accidentals.

As experience is the criterion to which the liberal theologian brings all developments, so this original deposit of faith is necessarily the supreme criterion of Scholastic theology. Its fruitfulness for knowledge depends, not on its dying and being changed into something else; but on its being preserved fixed and unchangeable. Round it, and concerning it, a vast body of doctrine has gathered through the prolonged collective labour of Catholic thought. But in virtue

of this unchanged nucleus, Catholic doctrine may be rightly considered *semper eadem;* just as in virtue of a persistently identical soul or self-consciousness, the man and the babe (as St. Vincent of Lerins says) are "the same," notwithstanding the gradual supplanting of the infant by the adult organism. There is something there that does not develop. We might roughly compare it to the growth of archæological lore about some such monument as the Moabite Stone: a growth partly in the interpretation of the sense of the inscription, and partly in the adjustment of history to such data as it can be considered to establish. So, too, Catholic doctrine grows in the measure that Catholic thought busies itself about the meaning of the deposit of faith and its bearing on other departments of knowledge; about its "explication" and its "application." By its "explication" is to be understood that process of analysis by which what is from the first actually, albeit confusedly, contained within the limits of the deposit of faith, becomes more distinctly and explicitly recognised, through inferences drawn from revealed data, or owing to a growth in perspicacity on the part of the reflecting mind whose, as it were, microscopic power is increased by general cultivation. And by "applications" scholastics mean inferences drawn from the combination of revealed with unrevealed premisses; and other adjustments of secular to sacred knowledge.

Now we have seen that certain categories and conceptions belong to the very substance of the deposit of faith; that were they exploded we should lose not merely the containing vessel but its content as well, since we have no means of separating one from the

other. True, as Mr. Ward says, "no philosophy was revealed; no science was revealed." "Yet," as he adds, "the Christian message could only be handed on in terms which include both."[1] But more than this, every truth of the creed, we are told, is either philosophical or historical. We cannot view it as a mere envelope of some other kind of truth. "God is a Spirit." "God is three persons in one nature." Let some new development of philosophy rob these categories —"spirit," "person," "nature"—of all their meaning and value, and what should we have left? They imply a whole system of philosophy just as every historical affirmation or denial affirms or denies the whole of history.

Hence scholastic theology has always and consistently fought tooth and nail for those philosophical categories and historical beliefs which it conceives to be involved in the very substance of the deposit of faith; it has never (as liberal theology could consistently do) treated them as indifferent vehicles of values that could be otherwise and better secured. On the ground that revealed and natural truth, as both from God, must be one, it has steadily condemned as spurious those developments of secular knowledge which seem to contradict its own reading of philosophy and history.

The task of Catholic theology has brought it into continual opposition and conflict with the ceaseless changes and developments of secular knowledge, which of their own nature threaten at times to obliterate those philosophical and historical beliefs in which the faith has been for ever enshrined. Hence it is that scholastic,

[1] P. 104.

unlike liberal theology, cannot be indifferent to the said changes and developments as though its ultimate criterion were realities and experiences, and not rather a doctrine about realities. On the contrary, it has consistently claimed a sort of indirect jurisdiction over the whole field of knowledge so far as the interests of its own categories and beliefs are thereby engaged. This is why we hear of "Catholic History," "Catholic Philosophy," no less than of "Catholic Theology": but not of "Catholic Mathematics," or of "Catholic Geography."

If then we speak of this body of doctrine, of explications and applications, which has gathered round the unchanging deposit of faith as a "development," it is not in the quasi-biological sense in which liberal theology uses the term; for it is only the protective husk, the clothing of the deposit which has grown; the kernel, that which is protected and clothed, remained unaltered. The contrast is like that between the simple bread-breaking at table in the bald surroundings of some early-Christian home and the solemnities of High Mass at St. Peter's. The nucleus remains, untransformed and undeveloped, in the changeless words of consecration. Nor are all the tomes of eucharistic theology and controversy otherwise related to the simple primitive sense of those words.

But though the logical development of this accumulating body of deductions is largely the work of theological inquiry and reflection applied to the deposit of faith in its relation to the rest of knowledge, yet the justice of such developments is ultimately determined, not as in the case of liberal theology by the fallible

rule of theological reasoning or of the consensus of experts; but by the infallible criterion of the Church's authority—a criterion as manifestly supernatural as is the deposit of faith itself. On no other condition indeed could the benefit of a revealed theology, final and universally valid, be secured to all generations to the end of the world against the obliterating influences of time and change.

Hence the old theology consistently teaches that the value of such infallible decisions is not causally dependent on the theological reasonings on which they are based, and by which they are occasioned; that they are in some sense prophetic, "oracular," from above. The accumulation of such decisions means necessarily a narrowing of liberty of thought by a further determination of truth, just as any growth of legislation means a narrowing of liberty of action by a further determination of right. It means bringing an increasing number of philosophical and historical positions, with all their implications, under the rule of sacred doctrine; it means an ever-increasing tension between conservative theology and free thought. This can seem nothing but a calamity from the standpoint of those (like Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson in his article "Ecclesiasticism" in the *Independent Review*, October, 1903) who do not believe in the divine truth of the deposit of faith, or of the Church's decisions; it can seem nothing but a great benefit to science from the standpoint of those who do.

If then scholastic theology ever appropriates the fashions and developments of secular knowledge it is as a mistress adopting a handmaid and imposing

restrictions on her liberty. Nutriment is changed into the nature and lives with the life of the organism; not conversely. Aristotelianism adopted by the Church was no longer Aristotelianism but Scholasticism. It was no longer free thought, unfettered save by the laws of reason and the facts of experience, but was bound by the categories and facts implied in ecclesiastical dogma. These it might illustrate, amplify, explain, but it might not alter. So long as it seemed unconquerable it was anathema in the eyes of theology. In the strong hands of Thomas Aquinas it was conquered and broken-in to her service. Doubtless in this as in other cases there was a severe struggle, wounds were given and taken; and theology may have appropriated more than she could assimilate; much that disagreed with her constitution for many a long day. To-day in face of the "new framework" of contemporary science and history, scholastic theology pauses, not with any thought of abandoning herself unresistingly to be absorbed thereby, of suffering herself to be worked up, as a branch of science, into the synthesis of the new philosophy, or of "coming to terms" by way of submission or concession, but only to see if she can absorb and subdue it, if she can use it to illustrate, amplify, and explain her own unalterable categories; if she can make of it a new *ancilla theologiæ*.

Such a wholesale appropriation would be far more difficult than in the instance of Aristotelianism. For if in some measure what is called the "Rigidity of Rome" be, as Mr. Ward says, but a temporary defensive attitude against a passing danger, or merely a paradoxical case of vital pliancy and self-adaptability, yet it is also

true that since the thirteenth century there has been a steady development of the principle and exercise of the power of ecclesiastical authority; that numberless questions then open are now closed; that the roots of theology have spread out far more widely into the field of secular knowledge; that the Councils of Trent and the Vatican represent, not passing, but permanent and very considerable contractions of the realm of free thought; that this tightening-up was really a recurrence to and development of the old principle of authority which had been weakened by the spirit of free-criticism that still breathed in the imperfectly digested body of Aristotelianism. Moreover, it cannot be ignored that the categories, methods, and actual teachings of Aristotle were much more congenial and assimilable to a theology already framed for the most part on the lines of Greek philosophy than are the entirely heterogeneous methods of modern critical thought with all their disconcerting iconoclastic results. Still less can we parallel this present position to that of early Christianity in the face of that Alexandrine philosophy, by the appropriation of whose forms Catholic theology, in any strict sense of the term, was practically first created. Such an appropriation had plainly no elaborated theology to contend with. Even the Judaism that furnished the categories in which the Christian revelation found its original expression was largely Hellenised; just as Alexandrine Hellenism was largely Orientalised, not to say Judaised.

We must now turn to a deeper contrast, underlying a surface resemblance, between the development of scholastic and of liberal theology.

Apart from the occasional interventions of ecclesi-

astical authority the development of Church theology is, like that of any other branch of knowledge, the work of experts as distinct from a far larger body of lay-folk who are passively receptive of what they are taught. Between these two bodies there intervenes a class of dispensers or middlemen who popularise and deal out the results of expert thought in the form and measure required. Such are preachers, catechists, school-teachers, text-book writers, and so forth. In a loose analogous sense we might call the experts the *Ecclesia docens* (the Teaching Church), and the lay-fold the *Ecclesia discens* (the Church Taught), and might class the middlemen with one or the other from different points of view. As there is nothing distinctively Catholic about it, it is not strange that this conception of authoritative teaching should also obtain in liberal theology, except in so far as there is perhaps something unprotestant about it, something that indicates an abandonment of a more individualistic in favour of a more social, and so far a more Catholic, conception of Christianity; a reinstatement of public authority as a criterion of religious truth in lieu of private judgment.

"The real problem of an intellectual life," writes Dr. Caird,[1] "is how to rise to a judgment which is more than a private judgment." We but travesty the theoretical position of the Reformers, if we think they denied this first principle of all education. Their error was in forgetting that the charismatic dispensation described in the New Testament was provisional and transitory; in supposing that every Christian could be the recipient if not of direct revelation, at least of such

[1] Quoted p. 54.

a miraculous charisma of interpretation as is now claimed only by the Pope; that each one's interpretations could thus be of divine and therefore of universal or over-individual value. They took to themselves severally, what Catholics applied to the Church collectively: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things; and need not that any man should teach you." They were at one with the Church as to the *semper eadem* nature of the Christian faith; but, contrasting the nucleus of the New Testament doctrine with the bulk of Catholic doctrine, they denied the identity, and considered the Church's authority discredited. Till then, the distinction between the original deposit and its authoritative explications and applications had been of little practical moment, nor was theology ready at once to draw the exact line in every instance. But the subsequent anti-Protestant controversy was all directed to show, first, that the essentials of Catholic doctrine were contained in Scripture and the earliest tradition; and secondly, that the Church, and not the individual, possessed the charisma of infallible interpretation in regard to explications and applications. Development in this purely dialectical sense (not in the sense of liberal theology) was defended as rational, necessary, and divinely authorised.

It is a matter of fact that there was an outpouring of the spirit of prophecy and interpretation among Christians individually in the first generation—a dispensation that died away quickly as soon as the Church took more definite shape and made it unnecessary. As the flood of prophecy ebbed, the dissentient utterances of individuals sought reconcilement in the higher

charisma of the assembly. Similar reasons subjected the dissensions of assemblies to the community or to the Bishop. Thence the appeal passed to Councils of Bishops, to Œcumenical Councils; till at last the process of definition came to rest in 1870, when the Pope was acknowledged as the highest and ultimate depositary of that supernatural charisma of infallible interpretation which the Reformers—on the assumption that the conditions of the first generations of Christianity were to be permanent—had claimed each for himself.

Needless to say, dissensions of doctrine quickly proved the assumption baseless; the theoretical criterion of individual divine guidance became in practice the criterion of private opinion, while the reference of disputes to more public authorities as depositaries of a higher charisma would have been self-condemnatory as a virtual return to abandoned Catholic principles.

It was inevitable therefore that pure Protestantism should soon fall a victim to the narrow individualism of the renaissance; that it should be absorbed and mastered by what it had not strength of constitution to absorb. Not till the claim to particular inspiration had been forgotten and discredited by the rationalism of the Aufklärung; not till the nineteenth century had wakened to the natural and organic (as opposed to the artificial and mechanical) conception of society, and seen in it the necessary condition of individual life and development, did Protestant theology begin, in the question of private judgment, to adopt a quasi-Catholic, but more strictly a liberal position. It began to see that it was necessarily in the collective mind of a society that religious (like other) truth must be elaborated and

developed; that the public mind must in some measure be the rule for the individual mind; that authority so understood was a condition of true liberty and originality as distinct from licence and eccentricity; it began to see such a society in the Christian Church—but all this as a consequence of the purely natural laws that more or less fallibly govern the development of the human mind, and apart from any belief in supernatural and infallible guidance.

If this meant a return to the rational and natural element of Catholicism, yet it meant a more complete abandonment of the deeper supernatural element—of the belief in charismata—in miraculous revelation and guidance. The differences are thus more fundamental than the resemblances. In point of growth, scholastic differs from liberal theology as wall-fruit from wild. The natural force of development is the same for both; but the peculiar fertility claimed by the former is secured by the intervention of a quasi-supernatural guidance from without. Each year demands and sees new fastenings, new restrictions of the natural wayward luxuriance. The recognition of the authority of experts in divinity, as shaping common belief and thus ruling the lay mind, has its parallel in the relation of scholastic theologians to the untheological multitudes of the faithful, but not in the dogmatic authority of the Teaching Church over the Church Taught. For the growth of Catholic theology is not, as we have seen, left solely to the fallible methods of theological reasoning, but claims to be supernaturally checked and controlled from time to time by divine dogmatic decisions or oracles whose truth is independent of the natural reasonings that normally precede them,

and is due to a special supernatural charisma possessed *ex officio* by the ruling authority.[1]

The submission which a Catholic yields to such decisions is nowise like that which every prudent layman will yield to the consensus of experts in any matter —a consensus whose value lies open to, and invites experimental test; but Church-authority is *ex officio*, and independent of natural or acquired gifts and endowments. If the disputes of experts in philosophy, science, and history were decided by the authority of the Crown, could any one accept these decisions as final and irreversible, as binding to interior assent under pain of sin, unless he credited the kingly office with a prophetic gift above and independent of the laws of natural reason? But the Pope's authority is one by which the theological experts themselves are judged and their schisms healed. Nor has it any parallel in the position of those dispensers and middlemen, those teachers and lecturers and writers who diffuse expert wisdom over the face of the earth. For these, too, are ultimately judged and taught by the experts. In short, there is and there can be no parallel in the natural order to the supernatural interpretation, any more than to the supernatural revelation, of religious truth. The former is but the complement and integration of the latter; both together are the presupposition of scholastic theology; they determine ever more closely the limits within which, the lines along which, it must move—limits the

[1] In all this I wrote now from a strictly scholastic, now from a strictly liberal standpoint, not hinting at my own position, so as to present the dilemma between the old theology and the new as clearly and objectively as possible.

absence of which is the essential characteristic of the liberal theology that deals directly with natural experiences, and not with revealed doctrines relating to supernatural experiences.

Not necessarily denying, but putting aside all belief in the miraculous and the supernatural, liberal theology works out the consequences of modern scientific presuppositions and critical methods as applied to the religion of mankind. Christianity is usually viewed by it as the so far highest and fullest development of the religious spirit; but Christ's revelation was but one of many that have been and may yet be. It was a great stride forward, but how many greater may remain to be made? Like Judaism, like every great religion, Christianity fancies itself the final and universal form;—"After us the deluge! After us the Parousia." Yet vainly. For, after a certain series of transformations, identical only as parts of the same process, it must die in order to rise again and live in some other form. Death and decay, no less than growth and development, are the universal law of life. The organism at last reaches the limits of its power of self-adaptation; and can hope to survive only in its offshoot, its progeny; as Judaism survived in Christianity.

Here is a free and unfettered application of the categories of biological evolution to the subject of religion, in which liberal theology with its own presuppositions and exclusions is perfectly consistent. But whatever abstract or *ex hypothesi* truth such conclusions may possess, they cannot be maintained absolutely and in the concrete, except at the cost of a wholesale repudiation of the bases of Catholic theology.

Thus it seems on examination that the recalcitrant elements in each system which make their amalgamation impossible, are of their very essence. Neither could "come to terms" by way of concession to the other, without being absorbed, without ceasing to be itself altogether.

Yet though it be vain to seek a *via media* by way of amalgamation or synthesis, we may find it equivalently, as Mr. Ward seems to think, in a *modus vivendi*. "Present reunion and war," he says, "are not exhaustive alternatives."[1] Neighbours quarrel because of their nearness; the jealousies and rivalries of adjacent territories are notorious. Now that the narrower channel of difference which divided us from those who formerly agreed with us as to the entirely supernatural character of Christianity has broadened into an ocean through the denial of that presupposition, we can in some way better afford to be on friendly terms with liberal theology without thereby seeming to compromise ourselves.

After all, as professedly scientific, its affirmations and denials can pretend to no more than an abstract *ex hypothesi* value. It is not useless for us to consider what consequences flow from certain premisses and exclusions; to see how Christianity stands according to the categories and connections of present-day philosophy; and on the supposition that the miraculous is not to be reckoned with; or that the Scriptures are purely human documents. Such abstract considerations of a subject help us to understand it better, and to realise the differences due to the excluded suppositions.

[1] P. 91.

Thus it is that liberal theology throws light on Catholic theology; and shows us more exactly how and where it stands in relation to modern thought. In some sense it is the very task of Apologetic to argue from the admissions of its opponents however narrow; to seek coincident proofs by every method, however unpromising; to show that truth may be approached from many sides and yet present more or less the same general aspect.

Again, it may mitigate the impatience of liberal theology to insist more emphatically than has always been done on the fact that the deposit of faith is a translation of supernatural experiences into the terms of natural; that its truth is the truth of analogy, not of exact scientific equation; that in guarding unchanged this divinely given "form of sound words"—these apostolic conceptions and categories and symbols—in securing that all subsequent theological language shall conform to them in sense or shall not contradict them, the Church is the guardian of an expression, that she claims no direct access to the experiences expressed—unique experiences which lie outside that world of ordinary experiences with which liberal theology deals. *Custodi depositum*, that is the sum and substance of the Church's commission as a teacher: *Ego enim accepi a Domino quod et tradidi vobis* is the substance of her claim. Moreover a recognition and emphasis of the distinction between a nucleus of revelation *semper eadem* and identical with the deposit of faith, and a developing body of theological explications and applications of that revelation, cannot but conduce to a better understanding of Catholic theology. The sifting of these two elements

is in some cases difficult; and here improved historical methods lie at the service of the theologian by which he can trace the body of doctrine backward through the centuries, and determine more accurately the limits between apostolic revelation and ecclesiastical teaching, between the original sense of the deposit of faith and what is merely protective of that sense against the corruptive influences of changing thought and language.

Catholic and liberal theology therefore move in different planes, deal with different subject-matters, develop by different laws, are governed by different criteria. In a true sense each may say to the other: "What have I to do with thee?"

It is by a clearer recognition of their essential and all-permeating diversity that they may come to regard each other with eyes untroubled by passion, and to understand their several functions in the working out of religious truth through the conflict of opposites, through the clash of Yea and Nay.

CHAPTER V

SEMPER EADEM (II)

THE purely critical and non-committal character of the previous article was not understood by certain theologians of the ultra-conservative school. Regarding Mr. Ward's very moderate and reluctant liberalism with suspicion, and finding in my article what they considered a very just exposition of their own view, together with a criticism of the extreme opposite, they concluded that my object was to attack him as identified with that extreme, and to identify myself with the other. Hence they applauded with both hands; and many to whom I had been previously anathema wrote to congratulate me as a returning prodigal. Even Mr. Ward himself was led away by their enthusiasm into accepting their interpretation of my intentions. In truth I had been equally just to both views, equally merciless to their limitations; and as to Mr. Ward, my point was that he had failed to reconcile them, and was, in principle, still on the scholastic side. When I repudiated the intentions attributed to me, those to whom moderation and objectivity are inconceivable at once inferred that I was making a covert attack on orthodoxy and a defence of ultra-liberalism.

The position was a sufficiently embarrassing one; and

to rectify misunderstandings I wrote the following article which the editor of *The Month* declined to insert, but which appeared a year later in *The Catholic World.*

* * * * * *

In a previous article I discussed some difficulties attendant on the effort to find in the doctrine of development a middle way between the dominant theology of the Catholic schools[1] and that of liberal writers—"liberal," in so far as they discard the fetters imposed on free thought by the belief in a supernatural revelation and in a supernatural interpretation of the same. We can believe in the rights of criticism on the one hand, and of Catholic theology on the other to work out the results of their several presuppositions; we can believe in unity of all truth, natural and revealed; and yet fail for the moment, or for ever, to establish that unity in a way satisfactory to our own or to other minds.

Yet the unifying effort is a plain duty on the part of the professed exponents of Catholic truth, nor will any number of failures justify inertia or intransigence. Not only is it incumbent on our theologians of to-day to establish by sound apologetic their presupposition of a miraculous revelation miraculously interpreted; but they must also show either that these presuppositions do not absolutely bind us down to the bygone thought-forms and categories of the various ages in which our

[1] Needless to say that Catholic theology is related to Catholicism as Christology is to Christ, or as natural science is to Nature, or as the theory of any living organism is to that life and organism, or as a man's account of himself is related to what he is. Between natural and supernatural reality there can be no conflict, but only between the theories of one and the other, between natural and sacred science.

doctrines were formulated; or else that to be so bound down is not that grave intellectual disadvantage which at first sight it would appear. For if to adhere to the social forms, languages, and usages of past time would cut us off from all healthy participation in the social life of our age and country, so too we should be shut off in sterile seclusion from the movement of contemporary mental life were we irrevocably committed to obsolete modes of thought with all their implications and consequences—unless indeed we were to cut away our religious thought from the unity of our mind and put it to moulder away in a watertight compartment by itself.

But if, on the other side, we are asked to accept the unanimous conclusions of critical experts, we may surely suspend our judgment until we see some way of reconciling these conclusions with convictions derived from more sacred sources. It may well be that the results of free criticism do not seem to us more irreconcilable with the teachings of faith than the philosophy of Aristotle seemed to the Fathers, or than the astronomy of Copernicus seemed to the theologians of the sixteenth century; but we too have a right and duty of intransigence *pendente lite*.

I ventured to suggest in my last article that the attempt to find a solution of the dilemma in the principle of development of ideas was in many ways unsatisfactory; that the principle was all-dominating in the case of liberal theology; that it was dominated and brought under that of authority in the case of Catholic theology. There it was a wild horse in the prairies; here, a tram-horse in harness moving up and down

within fixed limits along fixed lines; there it was mistress; here, it was but a handmaid, an *ancilla theologiæ*. And the root of this difference I assigned to the fact that liberal theology, like natural science, has for its subject-matter a certain ever-present department of human experience which it endeavours progressively to formulate and understand, and which is ever at hand to furnish a criterion of the success of such endeavours; whereas our school-divinity finds its subject-matter in the record or register of certain past experiences that cannot be repeated and are known to us only through such a record. In the former case our knowledge progresses not merely (as in the latter) in virtue of mental labour and reflection brought to bear on an unchanging *datum*, but in virtue of an ever new supply of experience, presenting us with ever new aspects and parts of the subject-matter. Our first naïve formulations and categories soon prove too tight and narrow for our accumulating experience, and after a certain amount of stretching and adaptation they burst altogether, and more comprehensive conceptions take their place. These we criticise not by their correspondence to the abandoned forms, whose interest is henceforth merely historical, but by their adequacy to the newly revealed matter. We do not ask if Copernican be true to Ptolemaic astronomy, but if it be true to experience. Nor does the liberal theologian ask or care that his theology be substantially identical with that of the past, but only that it be truer to experience than that which it supersedes. The new contains the old, not as an unchanged nucleus with additions, not as three contains two; but only as Copernicus contains Ptolemy; as

a new hypothesis is said loosely and inaccurately to contain the old, because it explains the same facts and experiences, albeit in a totally different synthesis.

For theological developments of this sort the conception of the *depositum fidei* as a record of a bygone supernatural experience leaves no place whatever. Those to whom that supernatural experience was accorded could not communicate it directly to others; they could not open the eyes of others to see what they saw. They could only (under divine inspiration) reconstruct the revealed realities in the rude algebra of conventional signs or symbols, by means of which others, for whom those signs possessed a like value, might reproduce this reconstruction in their own minds, and see, not what the Apostles saw, but the symbol thereof, the expression of things supernatural and ineffable in terms of things natural and communicable. That symbol, that "form of sound words," is the *depositum fidei;* the realities symbolised were revealed for a moment and then withdrawn again into darkness. Hence the preservation of that symbol, not merely of the dead words but of the meaning they bore for their first hearers, of the figures under which the mysteries revealed to the Apostles were presented by them to the minds of their followers, is the supreme object of the Church's conservative authority. From the nature of the case this original expression of the mysteries of faith is classical, normative, inspired; for it alone has been shaped in face of the realities expressed. Were it a mathematical equation, and not merely a defective presentment of the higher in terms of the lower, we might safely translate it into its equivalents

and not alter its truth-value; but, as it is, we dare not tamper with it; we cannot adjust or correct a representation of what we only know through and in that representation. But the Church can and does correct and adjust later copies, expansions, and illustrations of that representation by means of it. For not only are the inevitable explications and applications of the apostolic tradition liable to error; but the meaning of the language and symbolism in which it is transmitted is continually shifting. Words and material signs, so far as they are dead things, are comparatively stable, but their sense grows and varies incessantly with the growth and variations of the living mind. "La fixité des mots," says a recent writer, "qui désignent des choses mouvantes, trompe les esprits et cause de faux jugements." Obviously it is the sense, the thought-forms, the categories and not the material signs that constitute the *depositum fidei*. The Church criticises doctrinal developments by the standard of "Apostolicity," *i.e.* of their conformity to the sense of her original record, in respect to which they are either false or true. Her criterion of dogmatic truth is not the eternal reality, but the inspired representation of that reality given to her keeping by the Apostles. That later presentments of dogma should swallow up and supersede these earlier and earliest, as Copernican superseded Ptolemaic astronomy, is therefore (from the nature of the presuppositions of Catholic theology) quite impossible. For doctrinal development in that sense there is no room. The Athanasian Creed is not the fruit of a fuller supernatural experience than the confession of St. Peter, but is simply the explication of

that confession, the fruit of the Church's reflection thereon, of her ponderings and inferences; of her endeavours to relate it to the rest of human knowledge. There is no question of gathered experience bursting through the narrower categories and formulations; of new wine seeking new bottles. All unworthy though even the original inspired formulations must necessarily be, we dare not, in the absence of the eternal realities for which they stand, translate them into higher categories such as inspiration might have used had the revelation been deferred to our own day. For we only hold so much of those realities as is symbolised in the narrower categories; nor have we any other data beyond that limit.

By way of illustration of all that I have said, I would venture, with some diffidence, to contrast Newman's Anglican *Theory of Developments of Religious Doctrine*, as sketched in the University Sermon of 1843, with the application of the same theory in his Catholic *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845); and to show how, in being combined with the presupposition of a past revelation infallibly interpreted by present authority, it necessarily becomes an *ancilla theologiæ*, and loses that independence and supremacy which it possesses on the presuppositions of liberal theology.[1]

In the University Sermon of 1843, Newman asks:[2] "Why should there not be that real connection between

[1] I am only speaking of these two writings of Newman's, considered apart from the context of his entire life and work. Also I quite recognise the purely *ad hominem* character of the Essay on Development which simply takes Tractarianism on its own admissions, and may stand with a different synthesis in the author's mind to that which he is actually defending.

[2] P. 328 in Longmans' edition of 1900.

science and its subject-matter in religion which exists in other departments of thought?" He speaks throughout of the object of Revelation (the Trinity or the Incarnation) as continually presented to our apprehension in a way quite parallel to that in which the natural world is presented, and as therefore furnishing us in like manner with a sort of experimental criterion of our formulations and mental reconstructions of that object. "Revelation sets before it [the Christian mind] certain supernatural facts and actions, beings and principles; these make a certain impression or image upon it; and this impression spontaneously or even necessarily becomes the subject of reflection on the part of the mind itself, which proceeds to investigate it and to draw it forth in successive and distinct sentences."[1] Revelation is described as an abiding "master-vision" controlling the workings of the Church's mind.[2] A dogma professes to formulate the results of "direct contemplation" of the object defined.[3] The very "first impulse" of every Christian's faith "is to try to express itself about the 'great sight' which is vouchsafed to it," and which is the subject-matter of its theory just as the vision of Nature is the subject-matter of natural science.[4] The devout mind turns "to the contemplation of the object of its adoration and begins to form statements concerning Him" till "what was first an impression on the Imagination has become a system or creed in the Reason."[5] This "impression" of God "is not a thing of parts. It is not a system. . . . It is the vision of an Object," and "may be fitly compared to

[1] P. 320. [2] Pp. 322, 323. [3] P. 325.
[4] P. 327. [5] P. 329.

the impressions made on us through the senses."[1] As being "images of what is real," the ideas which we are granted of Divine objects may be called real;[2] and like all real concrete objects can never be exhaustively formulated. "Creeds and dogmas live in the one idea which they are designed to express and which alone is substantive."[3] This idea or "sacred impression," which is "prior" to its formulations, "acts as a regulating principle, ever present, upon the reasoning," just as ever-present Nature offers the test of direct experience to the theories of science.[4] "Religious men, according to their measure, have an idea or vision of the Blessed Trinity in Unity, of the Son Incarnate and of His Presence. . . . not as the subject of a number of propositions, but as one and individual and independent of words, as an impression conveyed through the senses."[5] For the understanding of all these quotations it is only needful to remember that with Newman "idea" does not mean the mental formulation of an experienced object, but the object itself considered as apprehensible and intelligible. In his *Essay on Development*,[6] he defines the "idea" of an object as "the sum-total of its possible aspects," or, as we might say, the sum-total of possible experiences in regard to it; and as this sum-total is inexhaustible to the finite mind, it follows that we can go on for ever developing our formulation (or reasoned reconstruction) of the idea.

This conception of doctrinal development, though applied to a supernatural revelation, is, I think, in principle identical with that of liberal theology. For,

[1] P. 330. [2] P. 330. [3] P. 331.
[4] P. 334. [5] P. 331. [6] P. 34.

in this view, the subject-matter of development is not a formulation of the object revealed, but the object itself ever present to experience—or at least present in the same way that material objects are present. To the objection: "There is no such inward view of these doctrines distinct from the dogmatic language used to express them," he answers: "It should be considered whether our senses can be proved to suggest any real idea of matter," [1] of the *thing in itself*, as distinct from the sum-total of experiences it produces in us. But this answer still insists on the parallelism between natural science and theology in respect of the abiding presence of those experiences which they formulate. "The senses do not convey to us any true impression of matter, but only an idea commensurate with sensible impressions." [2] Of matter *in se* we know nothing, but only of matter as it impresses itself on the senses; of the Trinity *in se* we know nothing, but only of the impression which it makes on the human mind by its revealed presentment thereto. This "impression" is not a verbal formula, but as real an experience as any sense-impression. Newman feels the difficulty of this supposition of a perpetuated revelation abiding in the Christian mind. He suggests that divine grace may implant new ideas; or refine and elevate to sacramental efficacy those of the natural mind; [3] that the illuminating grace of Baptism may produce at least a capacity for receiving impressions; [4] that "the terms and figures which are used in the doctrines of the Holy Trinity . . . may by their combination create ideas which will be alto-

[1] Pp. 338, 339. [2] P. 340.
[3] P. 339. [4] P. 333.

gether new though they are still of an earthly character."[1] But when we reconstruct some unique experience in terms of conventional signs for purposes of communication, all we can possibly communicate is this reconstruction and not the experience symbolised. Only those who have experienced the like will translate our communication into its true experience-value. It is vain to describe a symphony to a man deaf from birth; the novel word-combinations simply puzzle him. Unless we have here an "impression" of the supernatural already, words can never evoke such an impression to memory; no combination of natural experiences can yield a conception of an incommensurable order.

It seems to me, therefore, that as in the later Essay he is trying to square the same theory with theology, so in this sermon Newman is trying as far as possible to square theology with the free and unfettered theory of doctrinal development as applicable to matters of immediate experience; and that to this end he is trying to see how far revelation may be regarded, not as a past event, living on only in its record, but as an ever-abiding perpetuated experience of the mind of the Church. Were it such, then it is hard to see why we should venerate and rule ourselves by the past, and presumably less perfect, formulations of an ever-present object; why we should not be as free of the past as the liberal theologian who finds his subject-matter not in a sacred doctrine given long since from Heaven, but in the present facts of conscience and religious experience; or why we should need the intervention of an infallible

[1] P. 339.

authority to control the work of development and reflection, seeing that such a principle of control would be furnished by the experienced impression of the eternal realities themselves.

May it not be, that this sermon is a tentative counter-theory opposed to the Biblical-Protestant and, to some extent, to the Tractarian, appeal across the silent centuries to the oracles of a dead past as the all-sufficient rule of Christian truth; that is, a plea for a revelation that still lives and teaches, even as Christ's Spirit still lives and teaches, in the living Church; that it gropes after the notion of an "apostolicity" that is not the privilege of one age, but the attribute of all, making all equally authoritative; that it is so far in the direction of Catholic as opposed to Protestant and Tractarian theology? Yet as a theory it differs from that of the Essay and that of the prevalent school-theology in so far as it conceives the Spirit of Christ as an abiding principle of revelation, perpetuating in the mind of the Church that "master-vision" of God which was given to the Apostles; not indeed adding substantially to the content of that vision, but continuously expanding and elaborating its expression in accordance with the growth and development of the human mind from age to age—so that the Church of to-day speaks from *vision*, not from *memory*, of revealed truth. It conceives Christ's revelation as an element or germ of supernatural truth knit up from the first with the organic unity of the human mind of the Christian community, growing with its growth, strengthening with its strength, changing with its changes—and yet *semper eadem*, always the same in the sense in which every

organic growth (whose past nevertheless dies away into its present) preserves its identity.

In this view, the criterion of present expressions of the ever-revealed truth is not their identity with, or subjection to, those of the past, but their conformity to supernatural experience of the present—a criterion of little external or demonstrable value, and whose application is most difficult and obscure, compared with that of the school-theology. At best it might be possible to point out the unity of spirit between later and earlier developments; to show that these find their explanation and "final cause" in those; or to use the observed law of growth and expansion as a criterion; or to appeal to the test of universal spiritual fruitfulness. "As objects excite sentiments," he says in the Essay,[1] "so do sentiments imply objects." It might be said that the Spirit was given to us primarily as Charity, as a sentiment, and that doctrinal truth was but the object implied in, and deduced from, that sentiment—even as our constructions of the material world are deduced from our felt experiences. But all such criteria are hopelessly lacking in definiteness for purposes of doctrinal statement and confessional agreement.

In the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845) it seems to me that Newman, having the same theory of development in his mind as in 1843, applies it, only just so far as it is applicable, to the actual history of Catholic theology. He is arguing with the Tractarians on their own presuppositions. He is showing them that they can identify the Catholicism of the first four General Councils with the *depositum fidei* only

[1] Ch. i. sect. ii. n. 7.

by the implicit acceptance of a principle of development which should equally compel them to accept the Council of Trent. If this principle was always implicit in the dogmatic life of the Church; if it became imperfectly explicit in a writer here and there, as in Vincent of Lerins; yet it was too little in harmony with the statical modes of thought and with the imperfect historical sense of earlier centuries to have admitted in those days of the easy recognition which Newman, more than any one else, has now secured for it. The reference of doctrinal disputes of the first ages to the Apostolic Sees was dictated by the belief that they held the pure apostolic tradition unchanged and undeveloped. Actual, literal, and not merely substantial and virtual, apostolicity was for centuries the criterion of orthodoxy. The sub-apostolic age with its belief in an immediate consummation of all things could have no sense, no need of the supposition of doctrinal developments. Apostolicity was its criterion; and subsequent ages followed suit. In the theology of S. Thomas and the scholastics there is little or no explicit reference to the principle of development as a solvent of problems. It is assumed that the whole doctrinal system could be discovered in the Scriptures or in the Fathers by careful analysis and exegesis, as it were, by the use of a theological microscope and scalpel. The *disciplina arcani* and the imperfection of documents are liberally invoked to explain discrepancies which our modern theologians would explain at once by development. Literal apostolicity was still the test. Could they have seen the whole past history of theology even as we now see it, the fact, the process, and laws of its

growth would have forced themselves into recognition; but the interval that divided their age from that of the Apostles was for them buried in obscurity. In the sixteenth century the Reformers and their opponents argued largely on the implicit common assumption that literal, actual apostolicity was the test of Christian truth, and haggled over texts instead of testing the legitimacy of developments. The Tractarians, against whom Newman urges the principle of development, were certainly patristic in refusing it explicit and sufficient recognition, and in their notion of apostolicity, actual and not virtual, as the rule of faith. He shows them that both they and the Fathers implicitly admitted the principle, and that they must abide by its consequences; that it formulates a necessary law of the mind in its reflection on any subject-matter whatever, be it a fact or a document, an experience or a record of experience.

But the whole Essay of 1845 assumes the presupposition of the Tractarians, namely: the conception of the *depositum fidei* as being the communicable record and symbolic reconstruction of a revelation accorded to the Apostles alone. The subject-matter of the development there discussed is not an object revealed but the symbol of that object, the primitive *Credo*. Consistently with this, and only with this, conception of the matter Newman declares the need of "an infallible developing authority," not merely a *conserving* authority; for he holds that dogmas must be developed in order to remain the same.[1] Were the object ever present to us by a perpetuated revelation we should

[1] Ch. ii. sect. ii.

have in itself a sufficient criterion of its formulations; as we have of natural science in Nature. But the ever-shifting sense-value of dead words and symbols would quickly and hopelessly obliterate the sense of the primitive *Credo* in default of some supernatural intervention. In the hands of an unscholarly reader the New Testament yields a vastly different sense to that which it bore to its writers. If he have faith, he will try to square the rest of his mind with this misconceived divine teaching to the prejudice of reason; if he have no faith, he will scoff at what he has simply misunderstood owing to the changed value of language.

Again, it is consistent with, and only with, the same presupposition when Newman claims for this *Credo* and for its infallibly warranted developments that jurisdiction over all departments of thought which "imparts to the history both of states and of religions its specially turbulent and polemical character,"[1] and this, because "facts and opinions which have hitherto been regarded in other relations and grouped round other centres henceforth are gradually attracted to a new influence and subjected to a new sovereign."[2] If we hold the revealed object only as communicated in certain consecrated categories or thought-forms; if we have no direct access to it for purposes of adjustment, of re-expression and re-clothing, then the preservation of those categories is a matter of life and death. But they belong to and entail the unity of the whole living organism of human thought and knowledge; if they are to live they must be in agreement therewith; if, in the event of discord, they cannot yield to novelty,

[1] Ch. i. sect. i. n. 5. [2] P. 185. Edit. 1900. Cf. p. 355.

novelty must yield to them. Else religion will be a walled-off department of our mind; neither affecting nor affected by the rest. Here we have the conflict of Church and State reproduced in the realm of knowledge; another application of the same principle. Again, he is consistent to the same presupposition when he makes the earlier developments the criterion of the later; and the *depositum fidei* the supreme criterion of all—thus subjecting the present and future to the past. The inverse obtains in Natural Science, which can afford to discard its past theories or to judge them by their conformity to present views. For, in organic and psychological as distinguished from mechanical or dialectical developments, the earlier stage is explained and criticised by the later; the means by the end. The true criterion, namely, the final issue, lies hidden inaccessibly in the future. So far as present developments explain and find a use for what was inexplicable in the past, they are presumably in the right direction; but who can say what present irregularity or evil may not find its justification in what is yet to come? Liberal theology lacks that definite workable criterion which is furnished by an appeal to the past; it can only appeal to the criterion of an imperfectly determined spirit or law of development, if it is not to justify the whole existing state of things *en bloc*.

If Newman amends[1] the almost purely quantitative conception of development implied in Vincent of Lerins: "Small are a baby's limbs, a youth's are larger," by suggesting that there may be "considerable alteration

[1] P. 172.

of proportion and relation as time goes on," and that the butterfly is the development, though not the image of the grub; yet this is but to make room for "a multitude of propositions . . . which gather round the inspired sentence of which they come,"[1] or for "doctrines, rites, and usages," which "have grown up round the Apostles' Creed and have impenetrated its articles, claiming to be part of Christianity, and looking like those *additions*[2] which we are in search of."[3] The conception throughout is clearly that of an unchanging dogmatic nucleus round which "additional" propositions ever group themselves into a doctrinal system ever "the same," because its central beliefs are *actually*, its subsidiary beliefs *virtually* apostolical, *i.e.* identical with the "deposit of faith."

Such is the daring scheme of the celebrated Essay which harmonises as far as possible the dynamical conception of orderly growth and development with the more statical conception of an unchanging original deposit of faith, supplemented by infallible and irreformable interpretations from time to time. Though at first viewed askance by many, it has since commended itself so universally that the more ancient and literal interpretation of the test of apostolicity is now hardly maintained anywhere in its purity, except perhaps in the petrified theology of the oriental Churches and among Protestant Bible Christians, if there be any left. The *disciplina arcani* rusts away quietly among other obsolete weapons of controversy. The growth of doctrine is a fact that in the Western world has become evident to all. We must either (with

[1] P. 59. [2] Italics mine. [3] P. 92.

Protestantism) deny all apostolicity to these growths; or accept them as lawful developments, and as therefore virtually apostolic.

In the case of so subtle a dialectician as Newman, we cannot conclude at once that he is himself quite satisfied with a theory which he happens to be urging *ad hominem*, or that he is unaware of its difficulties and limitations. Thus, when he urges that the violent and unseemly modes of procedure which are sometimes alleged against Catholic orthodoxy of modern times were equally characteristic of the orthodoxy of the patristic age, and that courtesy and gentleness often seemed the monopoly of heterodoxy; or when[1] he replies to the charge against later Catholic theology of unreal and fantastic handling of texts by showing that respect for the letter and for the immediate sense of Scripture went oftenest with heresy, and that orthodoxy stood for the loose mystical sense, all this is plainly *ad hominem* and is not a plea for violence or for inaccuracy. And so, too, as a whole, the Essay cannot be adduced as demonstrably representing Newman's inmost, still less his final, view, or as really contradicting the University Sermon which deals with the theory of doctrinal developments and not with its application to a particular controversy and its data. Great however as is the relief which the Essay offers to "what has now (1845) become a necessary and an anxious problem,"[2] it raises or leaves unsolved some great difficulties.

As each department of thought and knowledge, so too (according to the prevalent evolutionary philosophy) knowledge *as a whole* grows from generation to

[1] Ch. vii. sect. 4. [2] P. 30.

generation into something qualitatively different; it is not only *more*, it is *other*. The collective mind of our day, it is said, is not that of savagery, plus that of barbarism, plus medievalism, plus modernity;—as it were concentric circles framing one another, or storeys of a house piled one on top of another, or wings and additions of different styles made to it at different periods and still persisting in their differences. The categories of the past have died and dissolved into those of the present; they do not and cannot coexist unchanged. Words and signs like dead monuments may survive, but their sense has perished to live again in something fuller or other. If this is not so, we must show that it is not so. We must show that the general mind does not grow in this organic fashion, but rather, as the scholastics teach, by working on certain permanently established categories, principles, and facts, the same for all men at all times, and by progressively building these up dialectically into an ever more complex and comprehensive system of knowledge; we must show that the development of doctrine, as described in the Essay, is simply a particular case of the general conditions, static and dynamic, of mental growth. If the first conceptions in which the Christian revelation was given us can grow out of all shape and recognition like letters cut on the bark of a young tree; if they are not immune from the law of progressive transformation; if the very subject-matter of our theology grows with the growth of the mind, how can it be used as a fixed standard and criterion of that growth? A building may grow, but if the building-materials also grow, the results

will be like those of the croquet-party in *Alice's Adventures.*

Ultimately the question resolves itself into this: Does thought grow architecturally or biologically? If the former, then the problem arises: Does the "deposit of faith" and do the infallible definitions of the Church, bind us absolutely to the proper values of the categories and thought-forms of the age in which they were framed. That they do, would seem to be indicated by the ceaseless polemic aforesaid between theology and profane philosophy, science, and history consequent on the indirect jurisdiction which the Church claims over the whole realm of man's thought—a claim which would be unnecessary did she hold these categories to be of but a relative and symbolic value which they could retain irrespective of the fluctuations of thought, and did she not treat them as finally assured, not as amendable results. If, as it seems, we are bound to them as of absolute value, as finally true for philosophy, science, and history, then we have a new brood of problems, for we must show that those of different ages are consistent with one another, and that those of all the ages together are still valid and furnish collectively a rule by which modern thought should be corrected. That is the difficulty on one side. On the other, if we deny that past forms are to be the criterion of present, and if we stand by all the implications of that denial, we not only contradict tradition in a substantial point, but we shall find it hard in many ways to erect a secure barrier against liberal theology. To find some *via media* between the Scylla and Charybdis of these pressing difficulties is the endeavour of those who, like Mr. Wilfrid Ward,

follow in the footsteps of Newman. To criticise this or that point of their solution is not (as I said in my last article) to deny the need of a solution; or to withhold any measure of the sympathy due to those engaged in so prickly and thankless a task. I have merely raised a question whether *in principle* Mr. Ward (or Newman in the Essay of 1845) has really departed from the position of those whom he considers ultra-conservatives; whether *de jure* he is really in the middle at all and not still at the extreme right—just as I might criticise certain other suggested *viæ mediæ* on the score that they must eventually land us on the extreme left. These articles do not pretend to contribute directly towards a solution of the problem in question; but only indirectly, that is, by endeavouring to clear the issue as much as possible, to indicate the precise lie of Scylla on one side and Charybdis on the other.

There is no reason why we should be impatient to press in between them and to hurry the solution of a purely intellectual problem which has hardly yet got to the stage of clear statement; and whose data are necessarily complex. Surely it is best to drop anchor outside and wait for a pilot; to be content with such a workable *modus vivendi* as I suggested in my first part, and to be exceedingly chary of premature theoretical unifications.

CHAPTER VI

MYSTERIES A NECESSITY OF LIFE

THIS essay appeared first in *The Month*, and then in the later editions of *Faith of the Millions*. It bears on Catholic Doctrine, as a whole, and does not depend on, or make for, the distinction between Revelation and Theology, experience and reflection, fact and theory. I republish it to show how baseless are the charges of "fideism" and doctrinal individualism that my scholastic critics have alleged against me; how absolutely necessary I hold social co-operation and tradition to be for the right development of individual belief; how far I stand from rationalism or "ethicism," and how near to mysticism; how entirely I demand a metaphysical depth, as well as a moral elevation for life. The essay accepts the positive, but not the negative or exclusive principles of "Pragmatism." As in *Lex Orandi*, so here I assume that the usefulness of hypotheses is not their sole truthfulness, but, within certain strict limits, an index of their conformity to the constitution of that world to which they enable us to adapt ourselves successfully.

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(I)

The atmosphere of popular thought at the present day grows less and less congenial to faith in the mysteries of religion. "Religion without dogma" seems to be the goal of modern aspiration so far as religion in any sense is its object. And by "dogma" is meant a formulated mystery—formulated by theology for purposes of communication and for the guidance of thought and life.

Even those, however, who hope to reduce religion to ethics propped up by theism, or to strike out religion altogether in favour of "absolute morality", remind us continually that life is solemn and significant, and that the ultimate *whence* and *whither* are wrapt in impenetrable mystery. "Significant of what?" we might ask; for here, "mystery" stands, not for the object of a dim and manywise imperfect knowledge, but for the altogether unknowable Beyond, which can in no way be formulated or expressed, or used for the guidance of life and thought. In that sense no one dreams of denying that life is compassed with mystery. Nor again will any deny that in the plane of scientific and historic inquiry the territory of the "unknown but knowable" stretches away indefinitely beyond that of the known; and that between the two there lies a certain borderland of the uncertain and conjecturable, which may therefore be called "mysterious."

The mystery, which religious dogma formulates, purports to be a truth belonging to a plane of reality above and beyond that which is subjected to man's scientific and historic inquiry; a truth which *can* be

known dimly, but which cannot possibly be known clearly by him under his present limitations; a truth which, being necessarily formulated in the terms of things which belong to the lower plane, defies exact expression and perfect intelligibility.

It is the tendency of modern thought to reject such knowledge, first, as chimerical and impossible; then, as valueless for purposes of life. Let us briefly examine this assumption; and to avoid every sort of special pleading, let us abstract from any dogma or dogmatic system in particular and consider the question in its most general terms and in the light of the common assumptions of those who would exclude mysteries from life as a useless or dangerous encumbrance; and let us see whether, on the contary, their function in life may not be as necessary as that of scientific or historical truths. This will not be to furnish a positive argument in favour of any given dogma or dogmatic system, but to show that there is an exigency of the human mind which must be satisfied either by the mysteries of revealed religion or by their equivalent; that such half-knowledge is an inseparable condition of man's upward development as spirit and subject; and yet that in every case it must be assailable by the same objections that are currently alleged against faith in the dogmas of Christianity.

One of the ever more widely accepted assumptions of our day is the *practical* character of all perception and knowledge; its complete subordination to life and action in whose service it has been developed *pari passu*. As far as any creature is passively determined by the forces of physical Nature and forms part of her universal

mechanism, it is, we are told, automatic, insentient, unconscious. As far as it possesses any true activity, any power of self-government and self-adjustment; any power of opposing itself to and controlling the mechanism of physical Nature, so far is it, because it needs to be, perceptive and conscious. For self-adjustment implies an "awareness" of the terms to be adjusted—*i.e.* of Self and Nature.

This principle is conceived to hold good for every sort of subjectivity—from the lowest sentient speck of living matter up to the highest developments of humanity. All alike are possessed of some degree of dominion over that mechanism of Nature, of which they form part in virtue of their organism; and their rank in the world of subjectivity is estimated by the way and extent to which, in virtue of their perception and activity, they can resist and control the determinism of Nature and prove themselves independent and opposing agents. Furthermore, it is generally assumed that the goal of the collective effort and struggle of life; of the ceaseless conflict between what may roughly be called Mind and Matter, is the working out of still higher and higher types of subjectivity which, in the manner and extent of their victory over determinism, in the fulness of their perception and action, shall approximate ever more closely to that divine but unattainable limit in which the opposition, carried to infinity, suddenly vanishes; in which such distinctions as Subject and Object no longer obtain, and whose mode of life and being cannot therefore be properly conceived by us at all, but must be expressed analogously in terms proper to our own order of life and being.

So far as we are allowed nowadays to speak of purpose and finality in the world, we may say that the whole determinism of Nature is conceived as existing solely to be the instrument and condition of this progressive development of subjectivity or personality; that so far as subjects act upon, resist, and modify Nature, it is only to perfect the instrument of their own development and to make a fuller and higher sort of action possible for themselves; that this action is an end in itself, and the very substance of life—to be valued for what it is in itself, and not primarily for what it may effect outside itself. In the language of religion we might say that Nature exists as instrumental to the development of the divine image in the subjective order—that is, in the world of feeling, thought, love, will, and action—where the creature is like to God just in the measure that it is able to "put all things under its feet," and to rise above the passivity and determinism of Nature.

The unceasing effort of conscious life, in all its grades, in all its subjects, is held to be upwards and onwards, towards a fuller and higher action, that is, towards a fuller knowledge and mastery of the opposing world—a mastery won and measured by comprehension and self-adjustment; nor does this straining come to rest as satisfied in man, but rather attains in him its greatest accentuation. By inventing for itself new instruments, devices, and methods, both of perception and of action, human life changes its range and character with a rapidity that bewilders us, and day by day pushes down large tracts of Nature's determinism under its victorious feet. Above all, by combination with others,

the individual is able to appropriate the collective and traditional experience of the society of which he is a member, and to secure its co-operation for ends infinitely beyond his separate capacity.

But the ends of human life are of two kinds: those that are clearly definable as being at least remotely within the compass of our present powers of understanding and accomplishment; which require an extension rather than an elevation of our capacities; which lie, however distantly, in the plane of our present attainments; and not in a higher plane. And then, besides this reaching out in all directions over the plane in which our faculties are so perfectly at home, there is an irrepressible and universal reaching upwards towards ends that lie on a higher plane; towards a mode of action and life which in some measure is beyond our capacity, which we cannot coherently formulate or satisfactorily realise; and which we desire all the more restlessly as we are less able to interpret or justify our desire.

The perennial murmur of man's discontent not only with what "the world" can give but with what it can be conceived as ever giving, is one of the banalities of literary and philosophic reflection at all times. We need only refer to John Stuart Mill's well-known confession that the realisation of his utmost ideals of a positivist Paradise on earth would still have left him infinitely discontented. He but gives voice to the conviction of all who have ever tried to understand themselves. No spreading out of life over the plane already attained can quiet its upward aspiration towards a higher plane; no fulfilment of the needs that we can formulate can suffice as long as we are pressed by

others which refuse exact formulation. The source of this ineradicable discontent, which is the very nerve and mainspring of all upward and onward effort, is to be found in the consciousness that the world of our clear perception and competent action is but part of a whole; that it is not self-explanatory; that the ends we can exactly formulate are worthless except as subordinated to some dim ends which we cannot so formulate; that our life seems ultimately governed by some secret universal power, for some secret universal end, and that we understand but the middle of the matter. But, according to one of our provisional assumptions, if we are conscious of a certain practical situation it is just because we are not passively determined in regard to it, but are free to determine ourselves actively. If then we have the sense of a Whole, whereof the realm of our clear intelligence and definite desire is but part, it is because we have the power and need and duty of freely determining our action in regard to it.

Conscious life is essentially self-expansive in the direction of a fuller expression of divinity; it grows irrepressibly towards a fuller and higher sort of action guided by a deeper and wider comprehension of that world, by the mastery of which its spiritual distinctness and free personality is realised and measured. If therefore man has a sense of that Whole which includes and stretches indefinitely beyond and rises above the area of his powers of distinct knowledge and effectual mastery, it is because he is capable of *some* action in regard to that Whole, and is not merely passively determined by it as if he were a wheel of the universal machinery; it is because his liberty and self-government

are not limited to a particular area, but are universal—the liberty of a creature capable of the concept of "Being"; capable of the concept of a Whole, whereof he and his proximate surroundings are but part, and through which alone they can be rightly dealt with; capable therefore of *dealing* with the Whole so far as he can adjust himself to it or oppose himself to it. Hence the self-expansive force of his life demands that he should strive more and more to know and understand the Whole in order to deal with it more effectually, and thereby to realise a higher and fuller kind of action or life; it urges his inquiry not only outward over the boundless field of the clearly knowable, but upward into the region of the dimly knowable; not only to the furtherance and extension of that kind of life which he has attained and to which his faculties are adequate, but to the furtherance of that higher kind which he is trying to attain and to which his faculties are inadequate—a life infinite in every dimension, because it is the life of the Infinite, and as such unattainable, though indefinitely approachable, by the finite. We are impelled by an inborn discontent to push forward and upward; to endeavour to overcome the limits of space and be everywhere at once; to overcome the limits of time and make past and future co-present in an eternal "now"; to gather all possible knowledge into the unity of a single all-comprehensive intuition; to accumulate and multiply our power in the direction of omnipotence; to bring together the countless irreconcilable experiences, between which we have to choose, into the fulness of some one impossible single experience; and to embrace all life and reality in the

simplicity of one Pure Act. In short, we must strive to live and express an eternal and infinite life "in the terms" and under the conditions of a temporal and finite life. The endeavour is inherently absurd and self-contradictory; its goal is not only unattainable but unthinkable; for the eternal is not reached by any relative victory over time however great; nor is the infinite an amalgamation of finitudes. Yet, though man cannot equal his desire, to strain *towards* that equality is the very law of his spiritual nature according to which all finite subjectivity presses upward stage by stage towards the inaccessible level of that Infinite Subjectivity which we are constrained to conceive in our own image and likeness—though in it the distinction between subject and object is meaningless since these two, as excluding one another, can never be absolutely infinite. Still it is as conceived thus imperfectly as Infinite Subject that it is the goal of our spiritual effort. We can only think of it as of a spirit whose knowledge and power and action and life realise that victory over limits towards which we shall strive for ever without possibility of attainment, finding our ultimate bliss in the assurance of an unimpeded progressive appropriation of those inexhaustible treasures of life whose possession shall have been inamissibly secured to us.

This infinite life and action, which we are constrained to express in terms of the highest of which we are now capable, necessarily evades our clear conception and remains for ever the "mystery" *par excellence*, of which all other mysteries are but determinations, or closer definitions. Every higher level of life than that in which we are at home must be to us to some degree

mysterious; dimly conceived; imperfectly realised; and therefore the ultimate and unattainable goal of all subjective development is plainly the mystery of mysteries and the source of all others.

If then our discontent with our physical and external conditions is the mainspring of our search into and mastery of the secrets of Nature; our discontent with all that this external life could ever possibly give us has been at all times a stimulus of inquiry into the secrets of that Whole Life, eternal and infinite, the vague but irrepressible sense of which is the source of our incurable discontent with the partial and finite.

On the current assumption of the complete subordination of knowledge to will and action, it follows that, if, on its "conative" side, life gives us not only a mass of clearly defined and realisable desires and ends, level with our capacities; but beyond these a deep-seated though inexplicable dissatisfaction with any ideal we can coherently formulate, and a vague though universal and irrepressible yearning towards ends which we cannot define; it must, on its "cognitive" side, give us a tract of clear knowledge and "knowabilities" level with our mind; and beyond this a region of dim knowledge and "knowabilities" partly above that level which can be expressed only in terms of the clearly knowable—a twilight vision of that higher life the search after which is the active principle of all our spiritual expansion.

That the higher aspirations and apprehensions should be thus vague, half-formed, and imperfect, is consistent with another of the popular assumptions of modern thought according to which life is viewed dynamically as a movement, not as a state; as consisting in a certain

process of continual transformation of which each moment dissolves into the next. We are told that our disputes as to the meaning of life are fruitless so long as we suppose that life makes for some definite and final state, some ethical, social, and political Paradise, in which its movement is destined to come to rest,—a state which human thought will some day be able to define, and human effort, to realise; so long as we look for some golden age which has solved life's problem in the past or will solve it in the future; so long as we take some fixed maximum of savagery as the Nadir, some fixed maximum of culture as the desired Zenith of development. Of no stage may we say: "This is human life *par excellence*." The earliest deserves the name as much as any subsequent—or rather as little; for life consists in the very transition from lower to higher; in forgetting what is behind and in reaching out to what is before. Any stage that should seek to perpetuate itself *as final* to the exclusion of further progress would be the end of life and also the beginning of death.

If this be so, we must look for something in the development of subjective life analogous to the physiological distinction between formed matter and unformed; we must expect to find that the higher kind of life, which is in process of formation, contrasts with the lower which is already formed and finished, as being more vague, feeble, and ill-defined; just as in art the higher and rarer results are less formulable, less securely attainable, more chance-governed than the lower and commoner which have been brought fully under our rule and control. And yet the lower is

valued solely for sake of the higher, the formed for sake of the unformed; just as formed habits of action are valuable for the sake of free and conscious action; and obedience, law, and order for the sake of initiative, liberty, and personality. This distinction between the formed and the unformed, the definite and the indefinite, areas of the mind and will, is essential to the growing conception of life as of a process ever striving to change itself into something higher *in kind*, as moving upwards to a future level as well as outwards on its present level. Thus, if on the practical or "conative" side, human life is ever marked in its higher manifestations by a partly vain endeavour to satisfy ill-defined aspirations towards a more absolute kind of life, through those means and activities that are adequate only to the clearly intelligible ends proper to our present level; on the cognitive side we have a parallel endeavour to think that more absolute life, and the world in which it is lived, in the terms and categories of this lower mode of existence; and the formulated results of this endeavour are necessarily mysteries.

Hence, from the assumptions already indicated, it follows that the recognition not merely of an utterly unknowable Beyond, but of a half-knowable Beyond, is a necessity of the human mind; that mysteries of some sort are as needful a part of its normal furniture as are the clear truths of history or science. If the desire to know and the desire to live are but two facets of the same energy; if the vigour of man's soul is measured by its dissatisfaction with its bonds and by its aspiration after a nearer approach to an eternal, infinite, absolute sort of being and action; it must be measured

equally by a straining to see beyond the limits of clear knowledge into the twilight of the half-knowable. To discourage this craving of the mind as though its object were altogether unattainable, or of no life-value if attained, is implicitly to deny man's power and need of upward progress, and to tie him down to the plane of earth. If it is wrong or useless to strain ceaselessly against the limits of our present mode of life, if contentment is a duty, then of course we should shut out this troublesome thought of the Beyond, of the Whole through which alone our partial life is explicable; nor should we strive to know it in full detail with a view to adjusting our life and action to it. But then, what becomes of the assumption that consciousness is correlative and co-extensive with self-government; that knowledge is only of practical situations to be determined by our action? Whence this idea of the Transcendent, of the Whole, of the Infinite Beyond, if it does not concern us practically; if it is not for the guidance of our life? And if it is for our guidance, how can we not want a more detailed knowledge of it? We are not content with a general conception of the physical world, but go on determining its laws and groupings to the minutest ascertainable detail; and in the measure in which we succeed, our power of self-adjustment or resistance is multiplied, and the possibilities of our natural life are extended in every direction. A similar determination of the over-natural[1] world would plainly

[1] We use "over-natural," throughout, not in the theological sense of "supernatural," but for the whole realm of spirit and freedom as opposed to that physical determinism which is the subject-matter of Natural Science. Similarly "natural" is taken in a correspondingly restricted sense.

lead to a like acceleration of our upward progress. The quest of such detail must be more difficult, less fruitful, than our investigation of that world to which our faculties are adequate; its results may be only analogous to the first gropings of the earliest savagery after some rude science of Nature; but it is as justifiable and even more imperative.

In this view of the matter, the mystery-hunger of the soul, rightly understood, is not to be checked, but rather deepened and fostered as an indispensable condition of subjective development. To limit our curiosity to the "exactly knowable" would be equivalently to limit our life-desire to the plane of our present possibilities and to forbid it to look higher; it would be to quench all spiritual aspiration and to preach content with the prospect of some socialist millennium in which life should pass into slumber for lack of further aims.

Further, it may be plausibly contended in the light of history, if not also *a priori*, that, in the gross, upward progress and outward progress are causally connected; that life cannot be permanently cramped in any dimension of its growth without suffering in the others; that the practical materialism which is fatal to every sort of aspiration after the more-than-natural or over-natural life is eventually self-defeating; that the eternal quest of the absolute life, ever to be approached, never to be reached, is the secret root, not only of that movement by which the soul strains upwards and labours for riches not yet clearly conceivable or firmly attainable, but also of that by which she spreads out in all directions over the plane of this earth and heaps up

those riches of experience which are within the comfortable grasp of her present modes of conception and action. Hence the rationalism which would sweep away mysteries as mere cobwebs of the mind, would cut at the very roots of all progress, spiritual and temporal.

A somewhat similar treatment of almost the same question from the Protestant side is given by Dr. Bernhard Duhm, of Basel (*Das Geheimnis in der Religion.* Mohr, Leipzig, 1896). To Newton's influence on recent modes of thought he ascribes the tendency of modern Protestantism to exclude the mysterious elements of Christianity as much as possible and to defend religion as simply the fulness of philosophy. Not only has this rationalism been viewed coldly by those champions of "exact knowledge" whom it was designed to propitiate; but *en revanche* it has roused certain thinkers to appease their starved but unquenchable mystery-craving by an attempt to reduce occultism to the form of "exact knowledge"—to create a science of "thaumatology." Laying aside, as a novel and arbitrary abstraction, the notion of Religion *in itself*, and viewing it, not in the philosophies, the ethics, the institutions in which it embodies itself, but as the positive reality so embodied, and studying it historically, Dr. Duhm finds it everywhere, from its lowest to its highest grade, occupied with a mysterious intercourse between man and invisible (and therefore mysterious) beings of a higher order—an intercourse whereby the level of man's life and powers is raised towards the plane of the superhuman or divine, and his natural limitations are overcome. Everywhere there is a looking forward to some future and better condition—to some life that will

be immortal because akin to that of the naturally immortal gods.

In ecstasy he finds the central mystical experience (*Hauptgeheimnis*) of the older or ruder religions; in ecstasy which, just because it seemed to raise the psychic powers to wholly new kinds of activity (not to speak of accompanying physical wonders), was not unnaturally ascribed to some sort of "possession" whereby the recipient shared a divine mode of life and being. In the disciplinary, ritual, and ascetical institutions common to all religions, he sees an attempt to communise these higher experiences, which are naturally the privilege of a favoured minority; and from a knowledge of these laws and conditions to put them within the reach of all.

This induction is interesting as showing how world-wide and world-old is man's instinctive striving towards a more absolute, though indefinable kind of life, in which the limitations of his present definable life will be overcome; and that his discontent is not merely with his perennial failure to realise his clear ethical or social ideals, but with those ideals themselves. It shows, moreover, how precisely the mystery of Christianity: "To them gave He power to become the sons of God," answers this universal aspiration of the religious sense. Our chief difference with Dr. Duhm is in that he seems not to distinguish between the use and the abuse of those rational systems in which the experiences of the over-natural life are used to construct a plan of that over-world to which they belong. Theology, as we shall try to show presently, is related to that world as science is to the natural world. Each multiplies and

communises the possibilities of life in its own order. Only when we forget that the over-natural world is necessarily expressed in terms of the natural, and therefore inexactly, does *theology* become what Dr. Duhm thinks it must always be—the foe of mystery. Then only do its dogmas become "Rätsel der Theologie," bristling with contradictions which when they are weeded out or interpreted as "ethics in parables," leave us with nothing but a soul-starving philosophy on our hands.

(II)

It seems then that, on the leading presuppositions which find favour with many who are impatient of mysteries in religion, the recognition of a partly knowable "over-natural" world beyond that world of Nature which Naturalism treats as the Whole, is bound up with the recognition of the fact of man's universal and necessary discontent with even the utmost clearly definable limits of his present mode of life and action. We must go on to show more fully that this over-world cannot be known even partially except under the veil of mysteries—whether natural or revealed does not here concern us.

As regards the manner in which our knowledge is acquired and formulated, there are other presuppositions to consider in order to see their bearing upon our problem. Our knowledge of Nature, so far as it means a sort of mental reproduction, constructed by the memory and understanding—a sort of plan or scheme, according to which we guide our action and supplement the meagre data of immediate perception and infer the distant from the near, and the future and past from the

present—such knowledge of Nature is won, we are told, by experiment; we live and act before we can have any theory of living and acting. The theory multiplies our power of living, and indirectly thereby makes an ever fuller theory possible. But venture and experiment is prior to the first and to every subsequent step of substantial theoretical progress. In the face of some new situation which is presented to us in consciousness we determine ourselves this way or that; more or less on a prudent venture; we observe the consequences; we remember and tabulate them for future use, entering them in that plan of Nature which we are continually perfecting for our practical guidance. In this sense our knowledge of reality proceeds from our need of acting and not conversely. We do not first act because we know, but we first know because we are constrained to act.

The Scholastic axiom that knowledge precedes action and will (*Nihil volitum nisi præcognitum*) is true, universally, only in the sense that there is a divine or at least a sub-conscious knowledge behind even our blindest instincts and appetites. It is literally true indeed of our free, self-determined will; for plainly, we cannot desire a definite object unless we have a definite idea of it. Yet not only our animal and race appetites and instincts, but also our spiritual craving for the divine precede any explicit knowledge on our part of the objects to which they are directed. It is solely by groping and trying that we discover what satisfies and explains them. And this holds most evidently of that total satisfaction of his whole nature which man is ever seeking, not merely to attain, but to know. The supreme will and desire of man's life is towards an end which he

cannot define. It is an implanted desire, not one which he has determined and chosen for himself.

Our immediate experience of the outer world at any given moment is not greater, but rather less, than that of the veriest savage; our advantage lies in our interpretation of the same data—in what we read into them and infer from them in the light of that scheme or plan of Nature which has been slowly elaborated by the collective observation and reflection of society, and communicated to us by tradition. Aided by this schematic reconstruction we can recognise and classify our present experience and learn what to expect from it. In other words, it is as an instrument of *clairvoyance* that this mental construction of Nature—this putting together of a world which is given us only piecemeal in direct experience—is so valuable; as enabling us to see what is here present to us, not only in itself, absolutely and apart, but in connection with the distant, the past, and the future which are hidden from us; as making our corresponding action to be one of self-adaptation to a far wider area of reality than were else possible, and thus deepening, widening, and prolonging our natural life. The elements and materials of this reconstruction are given to us, but the arrangement and structure is our own. There are no universals *a parte rei;* we may not project the sections and symbols of the map into the territory it represents. And yet as a sure and effectual guide to the traveller the map has a truth of its own—a practical truth; although neither in area, nor in appearance, nor in effect, can it pretend to be a replica of the concrete reality which it symbolises. Such is said to be the truth of that conception of Nature and History

which we have built up for our use, with all its connections and groupings, its laws of sequence and co-existence—the truth of practical efficiency as an instrument of life. Thus the old astronomy was true so far as it could predict our experiences; but the new is truer because its hypotheses seem to cover all cases more simply. Short of the unattainable limit of absolute life and of absolute power over Nature, our Nature-theory as a whole and in each detail can only be an approximation even to practical truth; else we should not need to labour endlessly at correcting and perfecting this instrument of life and fitting it more exactly to its purpose. It must always remain defective as a whole, and by consequence defective in all its parts.

It seems, then, that in each moment of our natural life in which we have to determine ourselves to act or not to act, to act in this way or that, the situation we have to face is constituted first by the meagre data of direct perception as a nucleus, and then by a certain Beyond (on the same level, however, of natural life) both of time and distance which is supplied by our mind as interpreting those data. Were it not for the previous industry of the mind, that Beyond would be simply an unfurnished blank; our action could be adjusted only to the present data as though they constituted the whole world of time and space, and it could have no far-reaching or enduring value.

Assuming this view of the nature and function of knowledge, and turning our attention to that obscure upward movement of life towards a higher plane of action to which its present faculties are only partially

adequate, we should expect to find that there too we must act and live before we can have any theory of that life and action; that practical situations are first offered to our direct perception, as it were in their isolation, which our ignorance cannot interpret in all their connections and implications, or as to their ultimate bearings; that the Beyond to which they are felt to belong is as yet an absolute blank; that in the face of these isolated situations we determine ourselves, with prudent venture, to some kind of action or inaction, and record the observed consequences in our mind for future use; that gradually these recorded observations are systematised by the collective labour of society and pieced together into a mental construction of the spiritual world which is communicated by tradition to each member of society, to be received and modified no doubt according to his individuality; that aided by the light of this schema we can adapt our action not merely to the bare data of direct perception—to the single "grace" of the moment as though it were the whole Kingdom of Grace—but to as much of the spiritual Beyond as they now reveal to us; and thus raise the level and extend the sweep of our life and liberty. Here, as in the natural order, though experience is prior to every substantial increase of knowledge, yet that increase of knowledge enlarges our possibilities of life and experience. Here, too, the truth of the mental construction is its practical efficiency as a guide to that absolute world, that Whole in the using of which our higher life consists. The elements indeed of that construction would be given us by direct experience, piecemeal,—as it were, a succession of pinhole peeps—but

the structure and arrangement would be determined by the nature of our mind and of our needs. Even practically and as an instrument of spiritual life the truth of such a construction could never be adequate, altogether or in part; could never give us that exhaustive grasp of the whole situation which would be the correlative of an absolute and infinite life. Still less should we be justified in projecting the "universals"—the laws and relations—of this mental arrangement of experience into the world beyond our mind. Like those of our Nature-scheme, they would be "formally" in the mind, and in the Beyond only "fundamentally," except so far as the Beyond included other minds like our own. The "truth" and reality of the scheme would mean: Go here or there; do this or that, and the grouping and sequence of your experience will be thus or thus. Whether "truth" can have any more speculative meaning than this—whether its correspondence be that of a portrait to its original; of two objects that may be presented to and compared by the faculty—need not concern us here.

If then our subjective life strives not only to spread out over the level attained, but to rise to a higher level, we need a mental construction of the upward as well as of the outward Beyond; the mere undetermined idea of that Beyond can supply no practical direction as to our action in regard to it; our upward growth must be and has been proportioned in point of fulness and definiteness to the detail with which the "truth" of that Beyond is constructed in our mind, and its resources thus brought under our control.

But if there is thus a parallel between our knowledge

of the natural and of the over-natural, there is also a divergence corresponding to the clearness and accessibility of the one realm and the obscurity and inaccessibility of the other in relation to our faculties. The highest developments of our subjective life are necessarily the least finished; we are but half-alive and half-aware in regard to the eternal and spiritual order; and this half-knowledge is what we mean by mystery. Half-knowledge of the natural order is due simply to a defect of evidence; but here it is also due to the defect of vision in the face of the fullest evidence; the fault is in the eye, not in the light. We find in ourselves an idea of the eternal and infinite—sure proof that we can and must determine our action in relation to the situation so revealed—and yet this very idea bristles with seeming contradictions, being expressed, as it must be, in terms of the finite and successive. And our upward desire and effort; our practical response to the attraction which the Whole exercises upon our spirit is marked with a corresponding incoherence. When we would shape to ourselves that ultimate good, that highest sort of life which is to deliver us from our present incurable discontent, we fail miserably, because we can only build it up out of the materials of the best that we know clearly; we can only conceive some millennium in which every now definable good will be realised—as though quantity could alter kind; or as though any widening of the cage of our captivity could satisfy our need of a free upward flight. As Fichte points out, and as Mill has confessed, the highest conceivable amelioration of the lot of humanity on earth cannot justify or explain the dictate of conscience and the religious

sense: "It serves no earthly end; there must therefore be some over-earth whose end its serves"; and again: "There is something in me that demands something of me and serves no purpose in the whole compass of this natural life, something that is altogether aimless and superfluous even for the highest ends that can be realised on earth."

If our attempt to live this higher life in terms of the lower is like the attempt to render an orchestral symphony on a shepherd's reed, our attempt to think and express it must labour under the same limitation; it must take the shape of mystery. "Of mystery," and not merely of parable or metaphor; for a parable may express the lower in forms of the higher; it may be in no degree simpler and more familiar than the truth which it is designed, whether to veil or to illustrate, or even to prove by analogy; whereas a mystery is an inaccessible truth squeezed as far as it will go into the mould of common language, without any poetic or figurative intention, but with a desire of the greatest attainable prosaic accuracy. The result of the attempt to fit the greater into the less must be that, when one side is adjusted the other will overlap, and that to correct one error we must always create another. Hence a mystery is a truth which can never be quite coherently thought or described, but which can be expressed more or less approximately by two or more complementary but partly inconsistent statements.

Every construction of the over-world in which our over-natural life is lived must be mysterious; it must be in terms that will seem contradictory as long as we fancy that *upward* Beyond as a sort of *outward* Beyond

—as a mere extension of our present plane of life into some region removed from our vision, but not from our understanding—an undiscovered continent of whose wonders we may learn by hearsay without learning anything altogether unintelligible. The assailants of mystery, partly through the fault of its defenders, are apt to overlook this difference; and to argue as though a mystery were a miracle in some outlying region of Nature, guaranteed by some sort of hearsay evidence. A miracle, by definition, must be intelligible as to the substance of the fact,—as intelligible as the uniformity to which it is the exception,—the only mental difficulty it presents is one of causal explanation, not of description. But a mystery strives to state what may be an obvious necessity or uniformity of the over-world. The Christian does not believe that his subjective difficulties about the Trinity correspond to a sort of muddle at the centre of all being and order; he does not credit the stick with the crookedness which it owes to refraction. What enters the denser mind as a paradox may be a truism for higher powers.

This confusion of two causes, which, if indirectly allied, are not necessarily so—the causes of Mystery and Miracle —is not without a natural basis in the philosophy of religion. The first naïve tendency is to regard the higher, transcendent world as *alongside* of, or intercalated with, the lower, rather than as above, through, or behind it; to view it as revealing its existence by interferences with established uniformities; as similar in kind to the lower world though indefinitely greater in its measurements. In a word, the necessary inadequacy of our attempts to express it is not at first recognised, and they are taken

as of literal value, actual or possible. Much that seems to us superstitious in the earlier and ruder forms of religion is due to the first efforts of an instinct that is as deeply rational as it is universal and irrepressible—to a desire to adjust our action to a world that lies beyond that realm of observed uniformities which we call Nature; to break through the limits imposed on us by the ordinary sequences of cause and effect, and rise to some sort of over-natural life. This hope, in its naïve form, is made to depend on the belief in observable breaches of Nature's uniformities, and as growing science brings these seeming irregularities more and more under the reign of law the basis of the said hope is narrowed, and is driven backwards from point to point till the fear of absolute extinction rouses it to recognise that its foundations are to be laid not in the level plains of the clearly knowable, but "in the holy hills," in the high realm of the half-knowable.

Even in higher forms of religion where the miraculous has been thrust down to a subordinate place as a mere authentication of prophetic witness and a seal of divine commission, the tendency to confound mystery and miracle, and to identify the existence of an over-natural world with the existence of certain rifts in Nature's uniformities which have so far baffled the scientists, re-asserts itself very persistently. It is often as "disturbing" agencies that God and the spirits of the departed are expected to manifest their existence, under pain of their existence being denied. Faith, conceived as contesting the same plane of knowledge as Science, is really degraded below Science, as though it were but a second-hand or hearsay knowledge of things, marvellous indeed

but not mysterious. Yet, rightly understood, as a dim vision of the over-world, *per speculum et in ænigmate*, it gains in kind over Science whatever it loses in clearness. The notion of a conflict between the truth of science and the mysteries of faith is possible only so long as faith and science are thus supposed to divide the same plane of knowledge between them, the former giving a hearsay knowledge of facts outside the range, but not outside the competence of the latter. But the concord rightly claimed for their affirmations is not that between the results of independent labours in the same field; as, for example, between the conclusions of two historians working at the same problem by different methods. The conclusions of faith and science should be harmonious, but in kind they are generically different.

On the presupposition, therefore, that life is essentially progressive, or rather is a progress; that it expands in every dimension, upwards as well as outwards; that it amplifies in quality as well as in degree, some kind of knowledge of that over-world to which it strives to adjust itself becomes a necessity. And on the presupposition of the ultimate subordination of knowledge to action, the success of that striving will be precisely proportioned to the measure of that knowledge. Again, since the highest developments of an unfinished process are themselves necessarily unfinished and half-formed, our knowledge of that over-world must be a half-knowledge clothed in terms of things we know clearly. In other words, on the presuppositions we are assuming, mysteries of some sort are a necessity of human life and progress. "Mysteries," and not merely mystery, not merely belief in the one mystery of an altogether

unknowable Beyond, which were as barren of practical fruit as belief in an unknowable Nature.

It will consequently be through action and experiment that we get this knowledge; we do not first know the world and then live in it, but conversely by living in it we get to know it; much as one, blind from birth, comes to construct a plan of the house he lives in. He feels his way about, groping at venture; and these successive experiences he builds up according to some system into a mental structure of co-existent parts; and this he modifies and improves with every new experience, and by its aid is put in the way of ever fuller experience wherewith to modify it. But the structure is not in terms of vision, though it has a truth of its own which can be brought to the test of experiment. Similarly under its present limitations, against which it chafes, the human mind has nothing analogous to a vision of the over-world: yet this does not prejudice the truth of that mental structure thereof which it builds up in accordance with its experiences, however obscure and difficult of interpretation those experiences may be. Here, as in the knowledge of the Nature-world, we owe much no doubt to the ordinary daily experiences and reflections which are in some measure within the compass of all men; to those who start normally from the results given them by tradition, who work out and verify for themselves the rules and principles that others have formulated, who prove the worth of the theoretical construction by its life-value. But we have a right to expect that this world too should have its Newtons; its revolutionary discoverers and originators to whose gifts and graces the whole race is indebted; men to whom chance,

so called, has granted altogether exceptional experiences revealing the secrets that lie nearer the very heart of things and enabling them to reconstruct and revolutionise our previous constructions of the over-world with a truth, not indeed exhaustive, but as different in kind from that previously attained as the science of Newton is from the magic of a sorcerer.

Assuming the purpose of knowledge to be wholly practical, to be merely that of an instrument of fuller life and action—a method of utilising our past experience for future use—it is obvious that it can throw light on each new practical situation, and justify our expectations of what it involves, only in so far as the connections and sequences of Nature are supposed to be uniform and constant—only in so far as Nature is conceived as a mechanism or determinism. This hypothesis of uniformity is the Alpha from which natural science starts and the Omega for which it makes. The experience gathered by human memory can be used just so far as it can be put in order and brought into one system whose members can be inferred one from another. We seek for, at once, the simplest and the most detailed catalogue of our experience; so as to pack away the greatest possible amount of information in the fewest possible ideas; to explain the particular or less familiar as merely cases of the more familiar and general. All scientific advance is in the direction of this ideal simplification, this construction of Nature in terms of its most universal elements—matter and motion; this reduction of quality to quantity, of organism to mechanism, and, in general, of the higher to a mere complication of the lower. Just so far as Nature can be represented as a

determinism of this kind; *i.e.*, just so far as this representation verifies our predictions and expectations of experience; can we shape our action fruitfully in relation to Nature and bring its resources under our control. The fundamental hypothesis of Nature-knowledge is not merely indifferent to, but exclusive of, freedom and spirit and the absolute; it is necessitarian, materialistic, and atheistic. But this profanity is harmless if its hypothetic character be always borne in mind, as unfortunately it so seldom is. A false or absurd hypothesis is an instrument of truth not only in geometry. We need to resolve the concrete, mentally, into elements which we consider separately and as they can never possibly exist, in order to understand their contribution to the simple resultant; we have to ask ourselves how a body in motion would behave apart from friction and other influences that could not possibly be absent; and we give an answer that is true only under the abstraction in question—on the supposition that there is no friction. And similarly the deterministic presentment of Nature as a mechanical whole, is true on the supposition that there is no subjective order, no freedom, no spirit, no God. And this false supposition, as such, is an instrument of truth and life, making not only for the better knowledge of the natural order, but for that of the over-natural, and of the whole of which they are both the mentally sundered elements or parts—sundered for purposes of understanding and, eventually, for purposes of life and action.

And from this we can see once more why our knowledge of the over-natural must necessarily be mysterious. The attempt at a complete understanding of what is seen

and known and willed, *i.e.* of the Object, as if it were one independent world apart; and at a similarly exclusive comprehension of the Subject, *i.e.* of the Self and its seeing and knowing and willing, as though it too could be adequately understood divorced from its correlative—rests on a false but practically useful hypothesis forged in the interests of truth. The abstraction issues in certain absurdities on both sides which contradict experience as given us in the concrete. Either part, treated as a self-explaining whole, must be in a large measure unintelligible and mysterious, still more must the whole itself when expressed in terms of either part alone.

But it is because both the whole and the higher part *must* be expressed in terms proper to the lower part, that the world of the Subject and of the Transcendent seems to be, and indeed is, shrouded in obscurity and mystery, while the objective world seems to have a monopoly of clearness. For, it is through communication of mind with mind that thought grows in volume and accuracy and that the mental construction of the world, which has been wrought by common labour, is communicated to each. The dependence of thought upon language is the closest conceivable. But for practical and necessary reasons our language first deals with that external world which is common to the outward senses of all; which can be pointed at, weighed, and measured; it speaks to the eye and ear in terms of things outwardly sensible. In this region alone can it be clear and demonstrably accurate. Slowly and laboriously, by comparison and inference, this sensible imagery can be shaped to a rude symbolism of those in-

ward experiences which cannot be directly communicated to others. If we seem at last to get an appearance of scientific accuracy in Psychology which deals with the subjective world, it is in virtue of a transformation of that world into terms of the outwardly sensible; it is through describing, not only complex sensations, but also feelings, emotions, volitions as aggregates of simple sensations—by a sort of psychological atomism. The attempt is useful for purposes of speech and understanding and action, like other false hypotheses, but it leads, like them, to various absurdities such as the denial of freedom and of true action; it proves the changes of our inward life to be as passive as those of a kaleidoscope—and as valueless. This dependence of our thought, for its clearness, upon language which is communicable to the outward senses, and into whose material terms our spiritual and religious experiences must be translated for purposes of conference with others, makes the obscurity of the over-natural world inevitable. Every communicable expression of it must be a transformation of it into lower terms; and these, if taken literally, must at points be in contradiction with one another and with the facts of that world to which they properly belong.

As long as such constructions of the over-natural world as are given us by philosophy or religion,—natural or revealed,—are assailed or defended without a recognition of these incontestable principles; as long as mysteries are confounded with miracles, *i.e.* with breaches of uniformity in the plane of clear knowledge, they will naturally be brought into discredit. While the growing recognition of the reign of law in physical Nature can never prejudice the possibility of an occasional inter-

ference with her uniformities connected with the occasional cataclysms of that subjective world whose organ and embodiment she is; yet the reduction to rule of so much that once seemed irregular; the difficulty of getting at the precise facts and then of being sure that they are outside, not only the actually known, but the possibly knowable uniformities of Nature—all tend to deepen men's *practical* belief in an all-pervading determinism of the physical world. This belief is undoubtedly hurtful to the credit of faith and religion, so far as their cause has been unduly tied up with the possibility of establishing rifts in the network of Nature's groupings and sequences; so far as the conception of the over-natural as merely an extension of the plane of the natural has been taken as more than an accommodation of truth to the limits of language and clear thought. But, on the other hand, it is the deadening pressure of this same brutal determinism on the living human heart that first rouses us to break the meshes of the fallacies that have entangled our faith; to seek its mysteries above us and not around us; and to turn seeming loss into certain gain. If science starves out the superstition that makes the over-natural merely an extension of the natural, it also starves out the superstition of Naturalism by working out the false hypothesis to its absurd issues; by showing that to explain the whole of human experience in terms of a mere part means to deny it in other parts and finally to deny it altogether.

Simply then in the light of current presuppositions, whose value we are not discussing, it is evident that human life and progress involve an upward straining

towards increasing self-adjustment with that over-natural whole of which the natural is felt to be only a part; and that this effort is futile except so far as some construction or plan of that strange country is possible; and that such a construction must necessarily be in terms of things clear and familiar, and therefore must be mysterious.

Those who look on our discontent with the best that this world could possibly offer and with any sort of bliss that could be clearly formulated, as a morbid symptom to be ruthlessly checked, are consistent in their repudiation of mysteries. If the Beyond is nothing to us—if it be only an idle unpractical notion that goads us for goading's sake but for no purpose and in no direction—let us, in thought at least, cut ourselves off from that Beyond and live and act as though this abstraction were true, and as though this world were a self-explanatory whole. But let us not in the same breath talk of life as an endless process of expansion in every dimension, upwards as well as outwards; of the practical bearing of every idea; of the significance of every universal and natural form of discontent, and so forth.

Still less consistent is the position of those who, desirous to retain religion and yet rid themselves of mysteries which they confound with miracles, would interpret their creed as merely an ethical parable, as susceptive of a banal and perfectly intelligible meaning in the moral order though, in its literal sense, irreconcilable with the determinism of the physical universe. In the first place they can hardly leave the Beyond so blank and unfurnished but that they will hold to some sort of thin deism or pantheism which itself is neces-

sarily, under all circumstances, a dogmatic construction bristling with mysteries as soon as we try to think it coherently in those terms of the Nature-world in which it must perforce be expressed. Secondly, our conduct in society cannot be determined till we know what we are, what our destiny is, and how we are related to one another. It is easy to say that to love one another is the essence of Christianity. It is indeed; but love is manifold in kind and strength—not a colourless abstraction; and it is mysterious in every form. Love is not conduct, but it is the motive and end of conduct and gives it its energy and character. It is of all things social, an affection of will towards will; and it takes its tone and quality from some apprehension of the bond which ties us together and of the world to which our life is related—be it the narrow world of Nature's determinism or the infinite world which includes the finite. Our affective relation to our fellow-men and our duties to them are absolutely different, according as we leave the Beyond wholly unfurnished or as we furnish it this way or that. Every single element of a man's religious belief lends its special tinge to the character of that love which constitutes his mystical and over-natural life. The over-natural life of the Christian—his mystical experience—is a love whose unique tone and character and mode of practical utterance is determined by that construction of the over-world which is given him in the dogmas of that creed that has come to him through Christ, and by which he is able to interpret and control and multiply the experiences of his upward life, and deal effectually with the situations that are offered to him in the light of a knowledge of their remote

implications and bearings, and not as though they stood apart unconnected with a wider world of grace.

Christian ethics are bound up inseparably with Christian mysteries. Clear these away and, in default of some substituted construction of the over-natural world, what remains is an ethics without foundation, without end, without character; neither Christian nor anything else; and that love which is the substance of the inward immanent life of the Christian soul, as opposed to the life of outward conduct, gives place to a vague amiability whose roots are nowhere and its branches anywhere.

CHAPTER VII

PRAGMATISM

NOTHING lightens the critic's labour more than to fix some class-name upon a writer and forthwith ascribe to him all the attributes of that class. Because, as is plain from the last chapter, I am in sympathy with "pragmatism," and use many of its terms and principles, it has pleased certain hard-worked reviewers, with no leisure for microscopy, to dump me down with the pragmatists and have done with me. In deprecation of such summary treatment I penned the following article for the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne* (October, 1905), under the title "Notre Attitude en face du Pragmatisme."

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Apologetic theology has its fashions and moods to a degree which does not obtain in theology proper. For it is essentially an effort to accommodate religion to current tendencies of thought. There is always some great and permanent gain to religious thought from this effort; something that remains after the said fashions have changed. For there is ever a root of reason to account for the fashions. Still there is always a danger lest the apologist fall in love with his

tools, and in gratitude for their undoubted services decline to criticise them, and suffer himself to be really mastered by them. The more a philosophy or a hypothesis is in fashion, and the more abundantly fruitful it proves for apologetic purposes, the greater the need of fixing our attention on its limitations, lest in easing the present distress we create a burden of difficulty for those who come after us. "Pragmatism," especially in the hands of W. James and F. Schiller, is an easy and illuminative philosophy, particularly pliable to the needs of the apologist. It bids fair to become as seductive, as popular, as tyrannical as "Evolution." In making Life the criterion of Truth, in subjecting the Law of Belief to the Law of Prayer it is evidently at one with the teaching of Christ. This fact creates an almost violent prepossession in its favour on the part of the apologist, and makes it all the more needful for us to consider it as objectively as possible, and, while acknowledging its merits, to question its claims as critically as we can.

Truth, in the intellectual sense, is simply the agreement of the Predicate with the Subject. To say it is *adœquatio intellectus et rei* usually implies that the mind copies something outside the mind—which, of course, it could not do, nor could it verify the copy, unless the something were already in the mind. In general terms, the truth of our mind means the agreement of the totality of our predications with the totality of our experiences. A world, or rather the materials of a world, is given to us in our inward and outward sensations; this has our own body (so far as it is an object of sense-perception) for its centre and for

the condition of all further sense-perceptions; and round this centre we are given the physical world, and the bodies of our fellow-men, and all the movements and changes and processes of these sense-objects. But as I cannot think of them except as being in space or in time, so neither except as being in thought—whether my own thought or another's.

But I do not gaze idly and indifferently on all this phantasmagoria. I not only perceive, but I feel these things; they hurt me or they please me, or they threaten pain or promise pleasure. They are all referred to feeling[1] as necessarily as to thought. As we easily confound thought, which contains all things, with the things themselves, and call these "thoughts," so we confound feeling with the things felt and call these feelings. The same sweetness that pleases one palate disgusts another; the feeling is the same for both, yet not the same. Pleasure and pain, whatever their object, be it sensual or spiritual, are conditions of the spirit as much as thought and perception are. The child at his play, the saint at his prayers, each is conscious of a rightly adjusted experience, of a harmonious relation to the environment; each is conscious of possessing his good —and this consciousness is pleasure. This does not mean that pleasure is homogeneous, or susceptible merely of quantitative differences. It is qualified by its object, and by that need or faculty in the subject

[1] I use "feeling" here for pleasure and pain in their widest sense; for our consciousness of subjective benefit or hurt. It is one thing to "feel" a certain degree (*e.g.*) of heat, another to feel that it is pleasant or unpleasant; and it may be either, according to our subjective need or conditions. We badly want a word to distinguish these two senses of "feeling."

which is satisfied by the object. It stands for an analogy, not for an identity; as play to the child, so is prayer to the saint.

By abstraction I can fancy myself purely passive in relation to what is given in experience; the prey, therefore, of dreams that flit by and plague or delight me at their will, but over which I have no sort of control. Such may be the life of a plant or a polyp. Yet consciousness and feeling would serve no practical end in Nature were they not directive of actions in some degree. Not only do I perceive and feel what is given, but I also control it in favour of good and its consequent pleasure, and against evil and its consequent pain. I find that that central object in the field of consciousness, which I call my body, or even my Self, and to which all others must be related in order to be perceived and felt, is changeable at will, as a whole and in its parts; that I have not to wait till things pass by and act upon me, but can go to meet them, and act upon them, and so determine my relations to them: that by moving myself, its centre, I can change the whole world of my experience and control pleasure and pain. In a word, feeling develops into action, and feeling with reference to such action in the further interests of feeling is called "will." To inquire which is principal or final in the life of the spirit, perception, feeling or will, is useless, for each is inseparably bound up with the other two; their relation is organic; they are but three aspects of one and the same life or movement.

Were not the world of experience saturated with Reason; were it disorderly and irrational; were there no uniformities or repetitions of groupings and sequences,

then memory of experiences would be an idle cumbrance; life would be impossible, or would be narrowed to that of a simple cell, whose pulses of action would have no connection beyond that of a mechanical continuity. That we can adapt our actions to conditions further and further removed from us in place and time; that we can thus deal with an ever expanding world; that, by reproducing the Reason of the world in itself, the Subject or Spirit develops towards Deity—that is, towards an ever fuller mastery and control of the Object—is due to the fact that experience is rational and regular, that it is stored in the memory, sorted and interpreted by the understanding; that we can fashion for ourselves a symbolic scheme or plan of the world, which enables us to see far beyond the actually present data, and accommodate our action to a larger view of things. To "think" is to try to put together those successive experiences that come to us in a more or less casual order, and are retained coexistently or simultaneously in memory; it is to discover their laws of grouping and sequence; to deduce a world-scheme. Thinking assumes the unity and rationality of the world; it is an effort to reproduce in ourselves that Reason with which the world, given to our thought, is saturated; that Reason whose children we are, whose nature we share, whose likeness we must perfect in ourselves. To relate one thing to another is simply to recognise them both as parts of one connected whole of experience. "What think you of Christ?" means "Whose son is he?" Truth is therefore the agreement of our understanding with our given experience; of our predicates with our subjects. And if by *thing* we mean not something

outside our experience, but what is thus given *in* our experience as the subject-matter of thought, then we may say truth is "Adæquatio intellectus et rei." Truth is from first to last an instrument, or rather a factor of life, of action; and so far, pragmatism is unassailable. "Copying for copying's sake" is, as W. James insists, an indefensible view of truth. We must know only because we must act, and love, and live; nor is it a concession to "intellectualism" to allow that it is equally true to say we must live and love in order that we may know. What we deny is any *real* separation or priority of spirit-life. We deny moralism and sentimentalism as well as intellectualism. Life is the test and criterion of truth, as serviceableness is of any instrument. But it does not follow that whatever is immediately or apparently useful to life is truly so, and therefore true. Nor does truth belong *per prius* to particular propositions, but to the whole mind or world-scheme with which such particulars cohere, and which they involve or imply. Such a scheme is truer just in the degree that it extends our power and control more widely over experience as a whole. And this total experience includes far more than the physical world of our sensations. It embraces the whole world of human life—æsthetic, ethical, social, political, religious—over which the spirit of man broods by reflection, feeling, will, and action; through which it is developed and enlarged in the direction of deity. It embraces the laws and uniformities of that spiritual side of the world to which, as by a new sense, man is referred by his selfless over-individual life of disinterested goodness, and to which he subordinates his separate and individual interest—which is the life of the Whole in him, so far as

he becomes conscious of himself as an instrument of the universal Reason or Spirit. That this world-scheme can ever be adequate, or absolutely true, is impossible. It must always be an attempt to think the Whole in terms of the part; or to treat the part known as if it were the Whole. But it can be progressively truer and truer, and this truth is tested by increased control of experience in its totality. The pragmatist reasonably protests against the Absolute in the sense of an external Something to be copied by the mind, which Something has no common measure with our experience, or in the sense of a Goodness which is transcendentally or infinitely unlike the goodness of human conduct and will, and can in no sense be copied or imitated practically. But truth is none the less an agreement with God as with an eternal or absolute standard; it is an agreement of our mind and reason with the Mind and Reason with which our given experience is saturated, not with a Mind out of all relation to us and our world. For God is the law of our life and being; our being is the expression of God. Even the tree may grow crooked and prove false to the law of its expansion, much more may self-determining man. True life is that which is true to the law of our Being, true to God; what contradicts that law is doomed, sooner or later, to sterility and death. Thus, *indirectly*, God is the measure even of our mind, *i.e.* of our interpretation of experience. In growing towards deity, through the understanding and control of experience, we grow true to that Spirit which works not only in us but in all else, and whose Reason permeates the world, and is reproduced in us in the measure that we grow perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect. But

this growth in truth and perfection is not merely mental, it is also moral and æsthetic; we must not only think, but we must also feel and act in harmony with the deepest law of our being, with conscience in its amplest sense, with the all-pervading Reason, Love, and Goodness—in a word, with God.

To give the name of "Truth" to any one factor of this harmony, apart from the other two, is to plunge into a sea of confusion and perplexity.

If "Pragmatism" has been severely criticised, and this not merely by intellectualists of the Hegelian School, it is partly the fault of its exponents, who are not guiltless of the onesidedness attendant on all reactionary movements; partly because the very word "Pragmatism" savours of that moralism which is sister-fallacy to intellectualism and sentimentalism. Mr. F. W. Schiller has therefore been well advised in calling his philosophy "Humanism." Largely as we may agree with the general tendency of that philosophy, we cannot view it as more than a rough draught, needing careful revision and correction. Still, we do it an injustice if we suppose that its war against the Hegelian "Absolute" is a wholesale abandonment of metaphysics, or an opening of the door to pure relativity. "The stream of Truth," says Mr. Schiller,[1] "which waters the fertile fields of Conduct, has its sources in the remote and lonely uplands *inter apices philosophiæ*, where the cloud-capped crags and slowly-grinding glaciers of metaphysics soar into an air too chill and rare for our abiding habitation, but keenly bracing to the strength of an audacious climber."

[1] "The Ethical Basis of Metaphysics," *International Journal of Ethics*, July, 1903.

Far from abandoning metaphysics, to deduce it from life and conduct, rather than from notions and concepts, is to place it for the first time on a firm basis, and to give it that interest which attaches to every study that bears, however remotely, on life and action.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIGHTS AND LIMITS OF THEOLOGY

THIS essay, reprinted by kind permission of the editor, appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, October, 1905; and was inspired mainly by Dr. A. White's book, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (New York, Appleton, 1903). It contains my first attempt to elaborate the distinction hinted at in the article, *Semper Eadem*, between Theology and Revelation, and to find therein a liberation for both interests. In substance I hold to it still, though if I were to modify it in some details, it would be in a conservative and traditional direction.

Thus, I have since seen that the revelations of those who knew Christ personally must naturally differ in kind from later revelations, and be venerated as classical and normative.

Again, though the spirit of Christ is the unifying principle of doctrinal growth, yet that spirit is apprehended only through its earliest, purest, and most vigorous self-embodiment in the Gospel. In this article I am too inclined to solve the riddle at the expense of the patristic and traditional notion of the deposit of faith as being a "form of sound words."

Also the term "Revelation" is here used sometimes to cover the whole complexus of beliefs reached through religious experience, without any distinction between apostolic revelation and dogmatic decisions, merely protective of that revelation. If Theology is cut free, and allowed to develop on its own lines, Revelation is also conceived, not as strictly developing, but as growing by accretion through dogmatic decisions. This is to allow to such decisions far more than that merely "protective" value which tradition assigns to them. It is to treat them not merely as reasserting, but as amplifying the Gospel.

Finally, though Revelation and Dogma do not control Theology as statement controls statement, they control it as a science is controlled by its subject-matter. This, though meant and implied in this essay, needs to be underlined.

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Dr. Andrew White's volumes appeared first in 1895. They are a collection of magazine articles that had been published from time to time in the *Popular Science Monthly*. If they are popular they are none the less the fruit of serious research and reflection. However disputable his main conclusion may seem to some, and his subordinate conclusions to many others, none will dispute the great value of the work viewed as evidence arrayed for judgment, as a repertoire of facts and documents that must be reckoned with and explained, not so much one by one as in their collectivity and accumulative force. Much as he admired Professor J. W. Draper's well-known work on *The Conflict between Science and Religion*, Dr. White

tells us that he himself felt that the conflict were better understood and described as one "between science and dogmatic theology," or "between two epochs in the evolution of human thought—the theological and the scientific" (Vol. I, p. 9). His aim, then, is to separate the causes of religion and theology, which Professor Draper confused, and to exonerate religion from a burden of guilt that we should lay wholly on the shoulders of theology.

In support of his contention that theology has invariably, and therefore presumably of its own nature, been hostile to the interests of both science and religion in the past, and that it must be so in the present and future, he shows us how, as regards the matter, manner, time and date of creation, and its sundry details; as regards the form, the delineation, and the size of the earth, the possibility and existence of the antipodes, the geocentric theory, the nature and movements of the heavenly bodies and their causes; as regards natural signs and wonders, comets, eclipses, earthquakes; as regards geology, the deluge, the antiquity of man, prehistoric remains, the theory of man's decadence; in the matter of chemistry and magic, causes and remedies of diseases and epidemics; in the explanation of lunacy, hysteria, and exceptional psychic phenomena; in the matter of philology and the origin of languages; finally, as regards the origin of religion, of Christianity, of the Church and her institutions, and of the sacred Scriptures —as regards all these matters he shows us how theology has been invariably the bitter persecuting foe of scientific truth; and this because she has claimed a divine and supernatural, and therefore supreme, jurisdiction over

the whole realm of truth. In each several case he shows how the innovations of science have been repelled, often violently and injuriously, as being blasphemous and heretical, as calling the divine veracity in question, as contrary to the sacred Scriptures, to the consensus of the Fathers, to the very substance of Christian revelation; how, in each instance, science, beaten back again and again, has at last come out victorious, while the theologians have been reduced, first, to disingenuous compromises, and finally, to discreet silence; and how what was defended as the very essence and substance of revealed doctrine has been quietly let drop into the class of non-essentials and accidentals, and the whole episode buried in edifying oblivion.

Much as we appreciate the ability, the sincerity, the religious purpose of Dr. White's work, we raise an objection to it analogous to that which he raises against Professor Draper. We feel that the conflict is not between science and theology, but between science and what, for convenience, may here be called dogmatic theology.[1] We use the term "science" and its derivatives throughout in that widest sense in which Dr. White uses it, not in the sense of naturalists, who would build up their whole philosophy according to the categories of the purely physical sciences; we use it in the sense of reasoned, as opposed to revealed, knowledge, based directly or indirectly on experience, such as can be attained by man's natural faculties, unassisted by extraordinary divine

[1] "Dogmatic theology" in the lawful sense is that which reckons with revelation and dogma as data of religious experience and not as theological statement. Here I use it as the equivalent of what I elsewhere call "theologism" or "the old theology" or "the dogmatic fallacy."

interference; in a sense therefore that will include ethics, metaphysics, and theology no less than physics or mathematics. We would submit therefore that, so far as theology is a science, it can raise no other conflict with reason than such as exists at times between one science and another; and that, so far as any other sort of conflict seemingly exists, it is only between science and that pseudo-science which we call dogmatic theology. To establish this contention and, as a corollary, to determine the true relation between theology and revelation, is the purpose of this article; or, in other words, to suggest a supplementary chapter for Dr. White's book on the transition, now in process, from theologism to scientific theology.

"On appelle *dogme*" (says Réville, Preface, p. ix) "une doctrine religieuse formulée par ceux qu'on regarde comme ayant le droit d'exprimer officiellement la croyance de la société religieuse dont ils font partie."

When theologians take the dogmas or articles of the creed and use them as principles or premisses of argumentation, when they combine them with one another, or with truths outside the domain of faith, so as to deduce further conclusions to be imposed on the mind under pain of at least "constructive" heresy, the resulting doctrinal system is what is here meant by theologism. We have called it a pseudo-science, not because it takes its principles blindly on faith—given the testimony of an omniscient and infallible witness, what could be more reasonable?—but because it treats prophetic enigmas and mysteries, which of their very nature are ambiguous and incapable of exact determination, as principles of exactly determinable in-

tellectual value, and argues from them accordingly. We propose to call this the dogmatic fallacy, and may now proceed to make good our contention.

It may here be assumed that the divine which is immanent in man's spirit does naturally and inevitably, at a certain stage of his mental and moral progress, reveal itself to him, however dimly, as a *vita nuova*, a new sort of life, the life of religion, with its needs and its cravings for self-adjustment to realities lying beyond the bourne of time and place; that, reflecting on this need, man seeks to explain it to himself by various religious conceptions and beliefs; and that, with regard to such explanations, it serves the purpose of an instinctive criterion or selective principle, as the appetite of an animal does in regard to its fitting dietary. It is chiefly and more immediately as a determinant of conduct, as consciousness of right and wrong, that this manifestation of the divine will is experienced. Man lives long before he possesses a scientific theory of life, even before he reaches those ruder practical explanations of its nature and functions that are forced on him at the very dawn of reflection. Yet the science is there from the first, implicit in life itself. So too the practices and observances of religion precede the explicit formulation of those truths by which, nevertheless, the said practices are determined. They form the skeleton which grows in and with the living body; it is not first constructed apart and then clothed with flesh, and nerves, and sinews.

What revelation (considered actively as the self-manifestation of the divine in our inward life) first defines for us is therefore a certain mode or way of life, action, and

conduct. It is only later, and in the second place, that our intelligence begins to reflect on this process and tries to picture it and understand it, to invent a philosophy or a history to explain it, and still more for the practical purpose of registering or fixing our experiences, of communicating them and comparing them with those of others. If we consider the generic characteristic of these explanations, to wit, the affirmed existence of superhuman transcendent beings beyond the range of ordinary experience, with whom, nevertheless, man stands in close practical relations of subjection and dependence, it is plain that the way of life or mode of action whereof these imaginings are explanatory must have reference to a world or order of existence beyond, above, yet closely related with, the world of daily experience. In this sense the teaching of religion is a popular substitute for metaphysics, so far as this latter stands for that part of philosophy which deals with the ultra-phenomenal; but they differ radically in that metaphysics, in obedience to a merely intellectual need, is deduced from a scientific reflection on the totality of phenomena, whereas religious beliefs are, in obedience to a practical need, explanatory only of the facts and phenomena of religious life, and are therefore only indirectly representative of the world to which those phenomena have reference. They are determined by life, sentiment, and conduct, whereas the rational "theology" of the metaphysician precedes and determines his practical life so far as it affects it at all.

In the main, then, religious belief is directly explanatory and justificatory of religious life and sentiment.

These latter are, in the first instance, determined by the nature and action upon us of that order of things to which they have reference, and not by our knowledge of that order. Certain suggestions or occasions first awake the religious need into consciousness; and then, by experiment, co-operation, tradition, we determine a complete code of *fas* and *nefas*, of piety and impiety. Lastly, reflection sets the imaginative intelligence to work to construct some picture, idea, and history of the world to which this code strives to adjust our conduct.

So far, then, revelation (considered objectively) is a knowledge derived from, as well as concerning, the "other world," the supernatural. But its derivation is decidedly indirect. What alone is directly given from above, or from beyond, is the spiritual craving or impulse with its specific determination, with its sympathetic and antipathetic responses to the suggestions, practical or explanatory, that are presented to it, whether casually or by the industry of the reflective religious intelligence. Here is the true "Urim and Thummim," laconic as the voice of conscience, deigning no information beyond "yea" and "nay," according to our questionings. To find the object which shall explain this religious need and bring it to full self-consciousness is the end and purpose of the whole religious process.

Every man has the power of shaping some rudimentary language for himself—a power which tradition and education render unnecessary, except so far as the language he has been taught may on occasion prove too narrow for his needs. So too revelation, in the above sense, is accorded to most men; but religious tradition and education are usually beforehand to wake up the religious need

and to overwhelm it with the treasures of the collective spiritual experience and reflection of the past. They are few who ever master this tradition in its entirety; fewer still who rise above it or revolutionise it. It is these last, however—the great founders and reformers—who alone are credited with being the recipients of revelation from on high, whereas in truth they often but reap what has been sown by multitudes of forgotten labourers. There is, however, little doubt that an intense feeling, passion, or emotion will in some instances incorporate itself in congenial imaginations and conceptions; that from the storehouse of the memory it will, as it rushes outwards, snatch to itself by a sort of magnetism such garments as may best set it forth on the stage of thought. In respect to such conceptions and visions the recipient is almost as passive and determined as he is in regard to the spiritual emotion so embodied. Hence these presentments of the supernatural world seem to be quite specially inspired, to possess a higher authority and to come less indirectly from God than those that are deliberately sought out in explanation of the life of religion. Yet in fact their only superiority is that they may indicate a stronger, purer, deeper impulse of the divine spirit; not that they are any more directly representative of those invisible realities known to us merely by the blind gropings of love. All revelation truly such is in some measure or other an expression of the divine mind in man, of the spirit of God; but it is not necessarily a divine expression of that spirit; for the expression is but the reaction, spontaneous or reflex, of the human mind to God's touch felt within the heart, and this reaction is characterised wholly by the ideas, forms,

and images wherewith the mind is stocked in each particular case.

But in thus allowing that the rudest religious beliefs are inspired so far as they originate purely in a spontaneous effort to interpret the workings of grace in the heart, we do not for a moment equalise them otherwise than generically; nor do we forget that there is here, as in other spheres of human life—in art, in science, in politics, in ethics—a true progressive tendency and a firm criterion of such progress, the criterion of life amplified and invigorated, or life contracted and impoverished. If the whole field of experience, if that world from which the philosopher draws his metaphysical theology, may in some sense be called a revelation of God, yet we shall be keeping closer to the original and historical sense of the term "revelation" if we refer it to those presentations of the other world which are shaped and determined by man's inward religious experience, individual and collective. Here it is that man seems to be guided and taught, not through the ordinary ways of knowledge, but more or less supernaturally, by a divine spirit in direct communication with his own; and this in the interests of conscience and duty and worship, not in those of speculative curiosity. Hence the peculiarly sacred character attached to revelation as distinct from theology. For the former, God is felt to stand guaranty, whereas the latter is fallible with the fallibility of the human mind. And yet it is to their eventual confusion as truths in the same order, to the ascription of divine authority to theology and of scientific or philosophic exactitude to revelation, that the mischievous results of theologism must be traced.

But in what sense are religious revelations divinely authorised? What sort of truth is guaranteed to them by the "seal of the spirit"? In accordance with what has been already said we must answer—a truth which is directly practical, preferential, approximative, and only indirectly speculative. What is immediately approved, as it were experimentally, is a way of living, feeling, and acting with reference to the other world. The explanatory and justificatory conceptions subsequently sought out by the mind, as postulated by the "way of life," have no direct divine approval. Again, the divine approval of the way and the life (and therefore indirectly of the explanatory truth) is mostly preferential, it is a favouring of one alternative, not as ideal and finally perfect, but as an approximation to the ideal, as a "move in the right direction."

To take the inspired imagery of revelation as representing the divine mind in the same way as a philosophy or science represents the human mind; to view it as a miraculously communicated science, superseding and correcting the natural results of theological speculation, is the fundamental mistake of theologism. Yet like all widespread and persistent errors it is a very natural one, as natural as the belief in geocentricism. It needs no slight degree of critical development to distinguish *momenta* in a phenomenon that seems to be given all at once and is therefore taken in the lump, *i.e.* to discern the soul of the act from its body, its essence from its accidents, the action of grace from the reaction of nature, the warmth of the heart from the light which it kindles in the mind, the infusion of divine love from the inspired image in which it clothes itself or from the

theological concepts in which it is afterwards clothed by our reflection.

The story of the birth of our dogmatic theology is now fairly well made out. Dr. Paul Wernle, in his *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*, with perhaps a somewhat too indiscriminate antitheological bias, shows the process by which a religion, that in its origin and spirit was so largely a protest against that theologism which builds a theology on the letter-value of spiritual and prophetic utterances, and makes the Word of God of none effect through the vain traditions of men, came itself to lapse into that very same fallacy. While admitting that religion without some sort of dogmas, some sort of beliefs and symbols of the other world, is as impracticable as ordinary life would be without some rude practical knowledge of ourselves and our surroundings; while even allowing that theology, though not essential, may be as helpful to religion as science is to daily life; yet it is all but impossible to imagine the Christ of the synoptics, the advocate of the poor and simple against the intellectual tyranny of lawyers, scribes, and theologians, attaching the slightest religious value to the theologically correct formulation of the inscrutable mysteries prophetically symbolised by the Heavenly Father, the Son of Man, the kingdom of God, etc., or making salvation to depend on any point of mere intellectual exactitude.

In its first form the Christian revelation was altogether apocalyptic, prophetic, visionary in character. The ethical teaching of the Gospel was not considered as part of it, or as in any wise new. The kingdom of heaven, its nature, the circumstances of its advent—this

was the "good news"; but the repentance, the preparation for the day of the Lord, lay simply in walking in the paths of holiness already trodden and marked out by the saints and prophets. But of these apocalyptic teachings the prophetic spirit was the criterion, even as it was the author; they were at first avowedly the setting forth of the future ideal order in figurative and imperfect language, borrowed from a lower order of reality; and, while thus understood, the only opposition with natural experience which they had to fear, and did encounter, was with the history of the future, which they seemed to predict more or less ambiguously. Very early, however, arose the apologetic desire to show that, as the spirit gave to children and weaklings a virtue and self-control exceeding that of the philosophers, so it gifted them with a miraculous wisdom or philosophy which turned pagan light into darkness. Hence the endeavour to argue deductively from prophetic visions to scientific conclusions; to discover the highest philosophical systems embedded in the Christian revelation, and then to find gropings after Christianity, thus interpreted, in all the best philosophies. Forthwith the resulting system, compounded of prophetic revelations and philosophical theories and conceptions, is proposed for general belief as a divinely revealed *Weltanschauung* or general philosophy, as having all the oracular authority of a prophecy with all the exactitude of a scientific theology. Here we have theologism full-blown in all its hybrid enormity, *i.e.* a would-be science governed, not by a scientific, but by a prophetic criterion.

Concurrently with this transformation of revelation into a revealed theology there arises a parallel and

dependent perversion of the notion of faith into that of theological orthodoxy. Faith is now an intellectual assent to this revealed theology as deriving directly from the divine intellect; it is no longer the adhesion of the whole man, heart, mind, and soul, to the divine spirit within—primarily a spirit of life and love, and only thereby a guide or beacon leading the mind gradually to a fuller instinctive apprehension of the religious truth implicit in the inspirations of grace.

So long as the Christian revelation was felt to be an utterance of prophetic enthusiasm, a communication of visions whose correspondence to the felt realities of eternity was more or less enigmatic and inexact, variations of form were not considered prejudicial to its truth. Prophets, like poets, may deal quite differently, yet quite truthfully, with the same theme. But, as soon as it pretended to be a revealed philosophy and to possess a more or less literal and exact correspondence to fact, substantial variations of form were felt to be inconsistent with the oneness and unchangeableness of truth. As mysteries of faith, the threefold personality of God, or the godhead of Christ, could not come in conflict with theological monotheism or the metaphysics of nature and personality, but as theological statements they had to be squared with the requirements of intellectual unity.

One inevitable result of this intellectualising of revelation was the sterilising (due to other causes as well) of the sources of prophetic inspiration. Under the tyranny of a dominant classicism, art and poetry dry up; yet this at most is the tyranny of a fashion, not that of a divinely-revealed immutable standard. To

force prophetic or poetic vision to take certain theological shapes and forms under pain of anathema is to silence and quench that spirit, the breath of whose life is freedom. Tried by such standard orthodoxy, the prophets who could not prophesy to order and rule were discarded as charlatans and impostors, and gradually their whole caste fell into discredit; nor was their function as agitators and reformers compatible with a conservative ecclesiastical institution, such as that into which the primitive communities were being fast welded. Such additions and modifications as the canonised doctrinal system subsequently received were chiefly the work of theological reflection, deduction, explanation, controversy, definition.

The current theological, philosophical, and historical beliefs and conceptions, in which the original Christian afflatus or enthusiasm embodied itself, being thus canonised as part and parcel of a revealed theology, and as being therefore God's own philosophy of existence and of human history, the whole force of the Christian religion, with all its highest sanctions and motives, was thrown into the scale against the progress of knowledge and, thereby, of civilisation. All those categories, philosophical, scientific, and historic, all those readings of the world and of history, that were involved and presupposed in the canonical traditions and scriptures, were imposed by conscience upon the understanding as the Word of God, as matter of divine faith, to be questioned only at the peril of one's immortal soul. So closely interwoven are all the parts of the kingdom of knowledge that this meant its entire subjection (at least in the event of conflict) to the ultimate control of

revelation now identified with dogmatic theology. The superiority of this so-called revelation over reason was no longer that of a higher kind of truth over a lower, excluding the possibility of conflict in the same plane, of prophetic mysteries veiled from the impertinent scrutiny of reason, but only that of a higher truth in the same plane or order.

Quite apart from the juridical and physical coercion so freely resorted to by ecclesiastical authority, the very conception of a divinely revealed doctrinal system, ramifying out into every corner of the field of knowledge, held the Christian intelligence for centuries captive to the Christian conscience. No philosophical speculation, no scientific or historical discovery, could merit consideration or toleration which seemed to come into conflict with a divinely revealed theology. Reluctantly, as time went on, and as the hopes of a near Parusia yielded place to a prospect of possible centuries of delay and of an intervening ecclesiastical era, the idea of development or growth had to be admitted to justify undeniable additions and alterations forced on the Church by the necessity of adapting her teaching to new times and regions and circumstances, to new forms of thought and speech. Yet in theory, at least, this theological development allows of no transformation of those scriptural and primitive conceptions, with all their now largely obsolete historical and philosophical presuppositions, in which the spirit of Christ first uttered itself. These are to be developed, like the immutable first principles of geometry, by combination with one another, or with truths of natural reason and experience outside their own order. Revelation having ceased with

the apostles, it is only in and through these primitive conceptions that we retain any sort of distant and mediate contact with the facts and realities which dogmatic theology defines, and by which its truth may be experimentally verified and criticised. In sight of these facts and realities, were they still present to us, we might venture to readjust these their earliest expression to our own mode of thought and speech; but now such a criticism is impossible. It is therefore a necessary supposition of dogmatic theology that the scriptural and apostolic utterances were faultlessly and divinely perfect, not merely as symbols, but as theology, history, and science; that it is itself practically like an abstract science in being delivered from these revolutions and changes of governing categories which befall sciences ever confronted and controlled by the experiences which constitute their subject-matter. Such, then, is the theoretical immutability of dogmatic theology. Needless to say, it is an impossible and unattainable ideal.

Two causes at least have at all times resisted this attempt to petrify the whole body of knowledge by thus giving divine certainty and finality to one of the governing members of its organism, *i.e.* to theology. First, the theologico-apologetic necessity (already indicated) of trying to demonstrate the harmony between the revealed and the scientifically assured conceptions of philosophy and history. Secular knowledge moves on by a process of true development and transformation, the old ever dying away and dissolving into the new. Dogmatic revealed theology professes to stand still; to say, to mean, the same to-day as two thousand years

ago; to be as exactly and finally true. In all cases, as Dr. White's induction shows, the first artifice of self-defence employed by dogmatic theology is to throw discredit upon those innovations of science which seem proximately or remotely irreconcilable with the obsolete scientific conceptions involved in the language and symbolism of the primitive tradition; to denounce them as heretical and blasphemous; to muster all the forces of religion and conscience to the task of their suppression. But, in proportion as this repressive effort proves impossible, as science marches forward heedless of anathemas, and as the credit and authority of religion seem likely to be the only losers in the conflict, the next self-defensive artifice is that of accommodation and compromise, of reinterpretations and distinctions between the letter and substance of revelation—all resulting in an ungracious concession to pressure, whereby, under cover of mere comment and explanation, the substantial sense of the "form of sound words" is quietly transformed into something different. He would be a bold theologian who should affirm that such articles of belief as the Creation, or as Christ's ascent into Heaven, His descent into Hell, His coming to judge the living and the dead, and many others, are held to-day in substantially the same theological sense as formerly. We may say that what we still hold is, and therefore always was, their substance or essential value, purged of non-essential accidents. But these accidents were once held to be essential *sub anathemate;* and those who questioned their necessity were (as Dr. White shows abundantly) persecuted and condemned as blasphemers, as denying integral parts of the divine

revelation. Theologians find it convenient to forget these chapters of history, but we cannot afford to forget them. What guarantee have we that what theologians impose on us to-day as substantial may not in like manner be explained away as accidental in some future generation? In consequence of this stealthy process of accommodation, the professedly immutable dogmatic teaching of theology has been reluctantly dragged in the wake of general mental progress, always lagging behind far enough to incur the reproach of obscurantism, yet not so far as to merit the dubious if not damning praise of absolute immutability, purchasable only at the sacrifice of all vital connection with the mind of the age.

The other cause which hinders the attempt to petrify theology is to be found, not in the theological and ecclesiastical, but in the spiritual and religious life of the Church. However perverted from its original use, Christian theology is, according to its primary intention, an instrument of the spiritual life; it offers a construction of that mysterious world to which the spiritual life has reference, in the light of which construction the soul can shape its conduct and school its sentiment, profiting thus by the registered collective experience of the whole Church, and building, not from the ground, but from where former generations have left off. That this construction has not been excogitated *a priori*, nor revealed miraculously at one burst, nor addressed immediately to the understanding, but has been suggested, bit by bit, by the instinctive movements and blind gropings of the soul after its rest and centre, has already been implied. But the developments of the spiritual and religious life, both

social and individual, require, like those of the mental life, a continual alteration and transformation of religious categories. Its thought is, as it were, its shadow, which grows and moves with its growth and movement; it is the index and register of the degree of correspondence between the soul and its supernatural environment; and of that environment it gives but an indirect, more or less symbolic, presentment, capable of endless modification and adjustment. It is as though we had to walk backwards towards the light, and to guide our steps by the shadows cast in front of us by the objects behind us.

For the exigencies of this ceaselessly developing life an unalterable theology would be a strait-waistcoat, a Procrustean bed; every day it would become less helpful, and at last hurtful and fatal. The soul that is alive, and wants to live and grow, must have a congenial, intelligible idea of the world it would live in, and will therefore either adapt and interpret the current theologies to suit its requirements, or else break away from them altogether and make a home for itself. To the irrepressible vigour of the spiritual life we owe those movements of religious revival within the Churches which have ever been opposed by the theological schools, and yet, when victorious, have always exercised a modifying influence on theological intransigence, even when the victory has been at the cost of a revolt or schism.

If dogmatic theology cannot afford to quarrel utterly with the scientists, still less can it afford to split with the saints, for nine-tenths of its strength are due to the fact that it can enlist, and has so largely enlisted, conscience and piety in its cause. Its great power in the past and present is principally due to its pretence of being at once

a revelation and a science, of possessing all that spiritual authority over conscience which is due to the promptings of divine grace, as well as all that logical authority over the intellect which is due to apodictic demonstration. If it has been unable to maintain its immutability absolutely, yet in the effort to do so it always has been, and will be, detrimental both to intellectual and to religious progress. It has crucified Christ, and "which of His prophets has it not persecuted?" and yet always in the name of God and truth and conscience and religion.

We have thus, in accordance with our proposal at starting, endeavoured to pass from the merely inductive conclusion of Dr. White's volumes (namely, from the fact that dogmatic theology is naturally and always the rival of science) to some more or less *a priori* understanding of the necessity of this hostility; and we have seen that it lies not so much in the general idea of theology as in its specific differentiation as dogmatic, oracular, or revealed. Hence we may understand, what Dr. White's investigations make so evident, why there is so little to choose between Catholicism and Protestantism, at least in its extreme form, so far as hostility to science is concerned; and that such difference as exists is just proportional to the different amount of "revealed theology" accepted by the two confessions. If the dogmatic fallacy is excluded by the spirit of the Reformation, yet that spirit has been very slow to arrive at adequate self-consciousness and self-utterance on this point. The Reformers took over with them the greater part of the old theology; their quarrel was with some of its conclusions rather than with its fundamental principles and presuppositions. And, even in its most anti-ecclesiastical developments,

Protestantism has clung fast to the dogmatic fallacy in retaining the Augustinian conception of scriptural inerrancy in other than purely religious matters.

But it would be an unpardonable exaggeration to lay the blame of all obscurantism at the door of dogmatic theology, even though it is responsible for its frequently religious and fanatical character. The inertia of customary ways of thinking, speaking, and acting is as much a factor of social development as is the progressive spirit with which it is ever at war. A permanent and entire predominance of one or the other would be equally fatal. It matters little whether societies, institutions, systems, sciences perish by petrifaction or by disintegration. Every new discovery, practical or theoretical, is met at first with a very wholesome public scepticism, and is expected to struggle for, and prove its right to, existence. Besides this, it often comes into collision with various vested interests, and threatens existing monopolies and privileges; and hence it is almost sure to encounter a more active and unscrupulous opposition than that of mere inertia. Moreover, some one with Dr. White's skill might easily fill a couple of volumes with the "warfare of science with the scientists," for these too have their tradition, their "authority," their inert resistance to all innovation, nay, more, their class-interests, their jealousies and bigotries; these too, "the priests of science," build up the sepulchres of those prophets whom their fathers persecuted. Also it must be allowed that, in the common conscience, what is customary and comes to us with all the weight of universal agreement is so nearly synonymous with what is moral, that the opposition offered to the innovator is largely sanctified and authorised in the

name of morality. Still, this is as nothing to the force, heat, and vehemence with which novelty is opposed, in the name of faith and religion, as blasphemy, heresy, atheism—a vehemence due to the belief that certain philosophical and historical propositions were miraculously revealed by God ; a belief which has consecrated and set free some of the worst passions in some of the best and holiest of men.

But, whatever advantages (as well as disadvantages) have accrued to Christianity from the process which so soon transformed it from a movement inspired by a belief in an immediate consummation of all things into a permanent institution and world-religion, the like must be credited to dogmatic theology as part of the same process. However great the price paid, it must be allowed that, but for the said process, Christianity could not have survived the disappointment of its primitive hope, or have lived to understand itself better and to determine its own essence more fully. In the creed of the Church there survives for us, as gold in the ore, the spontaneous self-expression of the most primitive, and yet most vigorous, stage of her spiritual life, clothed in the now largely obsolete forms and categories of that day; while in her dogmatic theology, which is professedly but the further definition and the extension of that creed, we have the product, not merely of apologetic and theological ingenuity, but also of the spirit of Christianity struggling to adjust the forms of the past to the religious needs of the present. If less legible and more sparing, the testimony scratched on the intractable but durable rock is worth more to posterity than the most elaborate record written in the sand. A patient

pondering and criticism of that testimony may enable us to discern those elements of our doctrinal system that have been selected, if not fashioned, purely by the exigencies of the spiritual life from those shaped by theological curiosity and other causes, good, bad, and indifferent.

It is then the slow working-out of the dogmatic fallacy that is revealed to us chapter by chapter in Dr. White's work. When, in opposition to the wisdom of the Greeks, the Christian revelation first claimed to be the "true gnosis," miraculously delivered by way of oracle and put within the reach of the poor and simple, to the confusion of the learned and cultured, this gnosis was hardly considered as a theology in our narrow restricted sense, but rather as a philosophy in the wider sense, a comprehensive view of all known truth under its widest and deepest aspects. As such it was inclusively a revelation of science and of history, of all those matters whereof it was avowedly a divine interpretation.

The fields of sacred and secular gnosis were much more largely coincident then than now, and gave the spectacle of one and the same territory under a double jurisdiction. The conflict was not so much between dogmatic theology on one side and science on the other as between sacred knowledge and profane, between the miraculously and the naturally obtained knowledge of the same matters. Thus, for the Christian, the Church became, if not the exclusive, yet the supreme arbiter of truth in every department. Subordinate to revelation as to the ultimate criterion, natural methods of investigation might have free play, but their conclusions could

have no weight if opposed by the Word of God. Conscious of this, no Christian inquirer could enter upon natural investigations unfettered and with a perfectly open mind. His faith, his conscience, bade him bring to the task certain revealed conclusions, that, *ex hypothesi*, would have aided and lightened his labour and given him an incalculable advantage over the unbelieving inquirer, but which, in fact, were only so much dust thrown into his eyes, rendering impartiality impossible and even criminal. Never were fact and hypothesis more diametrically opposed.

One unfortunate result of the tension thus created between the interests of conscience and candour, of faith and intellectual sincerity, was the gradual identification of the cause of scientific truth with that of irreligion; for, just so far as a philosopher or historian was a conscientious churchman, he would shrink from lines of investigation that might lead to heterodoxy, and would count it a matter of devotion either to torture inconvenient facts into agreement with ecclesiastical tradition, or else to bury them in a shroud of edifying silence. Hence the light of profane knowledge, if occasionally kindled, more or less innocently, by the dutiful and devout, was kindled more often by the inquisitiveness of minds less scrupulously religious. Certainly, in all cases where the glare of truth has been too strong for orthodox eyes, it has been mainly through the opposition of the heterodox and of the irreligious that the efforts to extinguish it have failed in the end. Thus even the religious and orthodox have come to acquiesce in the very embarrassing admission that, as a fact, science and religion are mutually hostile, that candour

and freedom of inquiry are dangerous to faith. To have thus falsified one of the first principles of morality, which tells us that conscience and truth are inseparable allies; to have perverted conscientiousness into a cause of mental darkness rather than of light, is the deadliest fruit of the dogmatic fallacy.

Dr. White, then, shows us the process by which the sciences, practical and speculative, broke away, one after another, from the control of faith and from the jurisdiction of revelation, and asserted their independence under the control each of its own proper criterion—a process by which the domain of revelation has been steadily narrowed down till at last little is left to it beyond the still disputed territory of theology and ethics, over which its hold grows weaker as that of science grows stronger. But in his final chapter ("From the Divine Oracles to the Higher Criticism") he consciously or unconsciously passes to another plane. Science having wrested the various matters just enumerated from the dominion of scripture, and of dogma based on scripture, at last turns its search-light upon the sacred writings themselves, on the history and causes of their formation and canonisation. This plainly is a more radical attack, a criticism of principles and presuppositions. Yet, here too, the dogmatic conception of the Scriptures as *verbally* dictated by a divine voice has been driven for ever off the field, and the claims of miraculous inspiration have been narrowed and altered out of all recognition. Needless to say that the claims of ecclesiastical infallibility, so far as they rest on, and are implicated with, those of such a scriptural inerrancy, must suffer a corresponding and even a greater enfeeblement. Moreover, the scientific

history of the current creeds or dogmatic systems, like that of the sacred records, offers proof conclusive that they too have not been created in full perfection once and for all in a remote past, but have grown like rivers from a confluence of innumerable tributaries deriving often from insignificant and untraceable sources. They are not the work of a week of fiats, but of the slow struggling of the spirit of light with the spirit of darkness in the heart of man.

Driven thus from one department after another of the field of knowledge, the last and of course the most vital claim for which dogmatism holds out is that of ultimate jurisdiction over reason within the strict limits of theological science. If all other assertions and implications contained in the divine tradition, written or oral, must be excluded from the substance and kernel of the inspired Word as so much protective husk, as accidental or incidental, as *obiter dicta* or what not, yet surely our notions as to the nature of the other world, and as to the conduct of our life in reference thereto, pertain directly to religion. If these matters are to be delivered over to the disputations of philosophers, what will become of the crowds? What, moreover, will be left of the once universal sway of religion over the human intelligence? Here the time-honoured arguments for the necessity of a divine revelation of some sort are plausible, and of course owe their plausibility to that mingling of truth and error whose hybrid issue is fallacy.

Religious truths, it is said, are of two kinds—those that can, absolutely speaking, be reached by man's wit, and those that cannot. Of the latter class are such

strict mysteries as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, etc., where neither are there premisses given, within the range of natural experience, from which such conclusions could be deduced, nor are the conclusions themselves capable of exact apprehension and statement. To the former class belong some of the most vital and fundamental beliefs of religion, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; yet so feebly, rarely, and hesitatingly are these all-important beliefs reached by the individual reason, that a divine revelation of them is necessary for the salvation of those multitudes who have neither ability nor inclination for philosophical dispute.

What is true in this view is the perception of the utter inadequacy of human philosophy to the practical ends of religion; what is false is the idea of fetching a ready-made philosophy from heaven as a substitute, or in other words, the implied "intellectualism," the notion of revelation as a direct instruction of man's intellect by God. In what sense it is indirectly instructive we have already seen, namely, in offering us experiences which the mind must strive, as best it can, to represent and explain, and in constantly shaping and correcting such explanatory presentments by further and fuller experiences.

This last struggle of dogmatism is doomed to the fate of its predecessors; theology and ethics as intellectual interests must inevitably be free from the direct control of faith with its practical and religious interests. The notion of revealed theology will prove as incoherent and fallacious as that of revealed astronomy, cosmogony, chemistry, medicine, or any other sort of

revealed science. For indeed the imaginary compromise by which dogmatism resigns the control of every science but one is daily proving itself impossible. The scientific system is one, and its parts are too closely knit together and interdependent to admit of the severance of one of the principal members, if not the very head and heart of its organism. In the realm of science the dogmatic criterion must be "aut Cæsar aut nullus." If Cæsar, then our attitude towards the natural criteria of truth must be one of conditional or suspensive submission—whence that tendency to a sceptical or agnostic habit of mind which so often goes with blind traditionalism, and gives plausibility to the definition of faith as an act of intellectual suicide or desperation.

Abandoning the idea of revealed theology as incoherent, we have therefore to inquire as to the true relation between theology and revelation, that is to say, between that philosophical construction of the other world which has been built up from the data of general experience by the reflection and labour of the understanding, and which belongs to the unity of the whole system of our organised knowledge, and that other construction of the same world which has been more or less instinctively created out of materials supplied by popular beliefs, sentiments, traditions, and views in obedience to the requirements of the religious life, and which is the spontaneous mental self-embodiment of the collective religious experience of whole peoples and communities.

Accustomed for centuries to the notion of a theology

that professes to be revealed, and of a revelation which professes to be theological, it is hard for us to fancy a relation of comparative independence which never has obtained and perhaps never can obtain altogether; for the intellect has always been curious about God and the other world, and about problems of ethics; so that, amongst the materials from which religious experience seeks a garment wherein to clothe and communicate itself, there are usually many theological and ethical conceptions, and these, in the measure that they are felt to be apt and congenial, are likely to be credited with a directly divine origin, or at least adoption. As known to us, the Christian revelation is largely expressed in the language of theology; while, on the other hand, theology, if truly scientific, must take account of the phenomena of religion in general and of Christianity itself, *i.e.* of a revelation embodying certain individual and collective religious experiences, which is given in and with those experiences, and belongs itself to the category of experience and not to that of statement. Hence we can only clear the point by some sort of abstraction from the condition of complication which actually obtains.

Given a long-continued working of the religious spirit under favourable conditions in some people or society, the result will necessarily be the growth and development of a certain system of conduct and observances by which man's life in reference to the world beyond is found experimentally to be fostered and extended. Explanatory of such observances, there will arise a publicly accepted body of beliefs and dogmas representative, at least figuratively, of the nature of that world

beyond, whose growth and modification will, if disturbing influences are left out of account, be determined *pari passu* by that of practical religion.

But, intellectualism and theological curiosity apart—which they never wholly are—the truth of these revelations or explanatory beliefs is best described as "prophetic" in relation to historic and philosophic facts and realities. No prophet feels or would allow that his utterances are merely poetical or allegorical; he feels that they are not less but more truly representative of reality, or representative of a truer and deeper reality, than the prose language of historical narrative or philosophical affirmation. Yet he feels that the said reality is transcendent with respect to clear thought and perception, that it looms through clouds, is revealed piecemeal by glimpses and vague shadowings; and hence that the fact-value of his enigmatic utterances is not closely determinable and may be subject to the correction of other criteria without any prejudice to the supremacy of faith over reason. Philosophic or scientific truth is always more or less abstract and hypothetical, and owes its definitiveness and certainty to this fact. Under such abstraction much may be true which in the concrete is false, and yet is incapable of scientific disproof. Hence the justice of the claims of intuition, of common sense, and of practical experience against many a scientific theorem. Our religious experience, being the sense of the dynamic relationship obtaining between our spirit and the Universal Spirit, affords us a practical criterion in virtue of which we can set aside any theory inconsistent with such experience. As merely a human explanation of our supernatural religious experiences,

revelation has no standing against science or even against theology, so far as theology is a science; it is simply the artless explanation of a child as against that of an instructed mind. But the child's story, because artless, has another value as an unsophisticated statement and direct product of experience; and in this sense too revelation and prophetic utterance are worth more than theology or science, because they are simply the natural shadow of experience, of religious fact. Hence, too, traditional belief, so far as it is the product of the collective and continuous experience of the community and has not been sophisticated by theology, has that critical superiority over science which the concrete has over the abstract; it is critically valuable, not as an explanation, but as embodying or implying the phenomenon to be explained. Its artless constructions of history and science and philosophy may crumble under the touch of criticism; but this latter will be condemned unless its reconstructions find room for all that revelation strove to shelter.

It is impossible within these limits to give perfect precision to this notion of prophetic truth whose object, unlike that of science or history, is the ideal rather than the actual; the future, or else the eternal, rather than the past or present; what ought to be and is in process of becoming, rather than what is. The character of what, by way of contrast, we may call fact-truth is coherence or consistence with that systematic reconstruction of the world which is slowly built up by the labour of the understanding. Though such coherence is no proof of truth, yet any historical or scientific assertion which is out of joint with the rest of our systematised

knowledge must be rejected, or else the whole system must be modified to make room for it. Prophetic truths, as incapable of exact determination, cannot be thus systematised. Misinterpreted as literal statements of fact, they are often inconsistent with one another and with the world of fact-truths.

Prophecy has a twofold utterance. It expresses itself in deliberately sought-out symbolism, observance, ritual, parable, and fiction, or else in a more or less idealised reading of history and nature. The moral and religious sense of man is determined by his fundamental unity with the source and end of his being and of all being, of what ought to be and is in process of becoming, as well as of what is. It is ever seeking to understand and interpret itself, and to find that ideal or object in which its satisfaction will be complete. In its reading of history and nature it is ever keen and impatient to see its own desire realised; to interpret the kingdom of God as near; to believe that what, according to its limited outlook, ought to be, already is; that what ought to have been, actually was; to narrow up prematurely to a sudden apex the slowly convergent lines of God's providence stretching out beyond all range of our vision; and to find the fulness of His scheme in the brief pages of our recorded history. Hence it is ever at war with common sense and with fact as a bias, a principle of falsification. Yet each is right in its own order of truth; each wrong in its trespass on the other's territory; both right only when they listen to and learn from each other, and strain after that perfect accord which belongs to their ideal perfection. Eventually prophecy justifies and gains through the resistance

offered by common sense to its impatience of fact, even as common sense comes at last to justify the instinct, though not the critical judgment of prophecy. Still, at any given stage, the prophetic reading of history is truer to the deeper and more distant realities than is the common-sense reading; it is more like what ought to be and what will be, than what is; more like what therefore is, in the deepest stratum of reality, than what is, on the surface.

Plainly the attitude of prophecy towards historic and scientific truth can never be so indifferent as that of poesy and art. Religion and morality claim the supreme government of man's life, *i.e.* they imply that the ultimate purpose and reality of life are religious. To see God working in history and in nature, not merely as power and wisdom, but principally as goodness and love, is an exigency of religion. Prophecy, unlike art, is not merely contemplative, but is primarily practical and directive of that life which man lives in history and in nature, and with reference to God as working in both one and the other. Poetry has no such function. For the poet the æsthetic value of the Gospels is independent of their prose-truth; for the prophet this prose-truth is the very subject-matter which is transfused and perhaps transfigured by the glow of his spirit.

Considered as true with the truth of prophecy, which, as utterances of the prophetic spirit, is all that they can claim, the dogmas of revelation would rarely, if ever, come into dialectical conflict with one another or with science and history, and, as time went on, would insensibly modify their form of expression so as to retain

their symbolic value unaltered. Their exponents would rightly refuse to be tied to exact statements of their speculative value, insisting rather on their pragmatical, provisional, and approximative truth, so far as the "fact-world" is concerned, and on the necessarily undefinable nature of the "ought-world" and its eternal realities. The development of such a body of dogmas or mysteries would not be dialectical, like that of abstract sciences, nor quasi-organic, like that of natural sciences, but analogous to that of ecclesiastical ritual and observance, which preserves its substantial unity of signification in spite of local variations and a continual process of obsolescence and accretion; and, like ritual, it would call for and be subject to the unifying control of the Church. As there is a continuous development of the Christian life and spirit in the Christian people, so there would be a unity and continuity in the varying symbolism of successive ages by which that life and spirit is interpreted—such a unity as might belong to an educated man's conceptions and explanations of his own nature and character at the different decades of his life. The unifying principle is not any "fundamental theologoumenon," but that spirit of Christianity which is characterised by what God *is*, and man *is*, and Christ *is*, not by our *notions* of what they are. Our notions of what they are, are embodied in dogmas and prophetic mysteries; and these are fundamental in the sense that certain rites (baptism, or the breaking of bread) are fundamental, binding ages and nations together, making a permanent core round which is clustered a body of variable usages, and serving as an outward and effectual sign of an

all-pervading unity of the inward spirit. To demand, as some liberals do, an up-to-date restatement of dogmas is really to ignore their prophetic character and to interpret them scientifically as dogmatic theology does.

But, both for good and evil, theological curiosity (as well as other obstructive influences) hinders the course of true religion from running so smoothly. The exponents of religion are early tempted to claim dominion over all knowledge in consequence of their close relation with the deity, and to present revelation as a miraculous gnosis. Moreover, in assuming current theological notions as congenial vehicles of self-expression, the spirit is too readily supposed to seal them with a theological finality and certainty. Finally, as soon as revelation is credited with scientific, instead of prophetic truth, it is at once petrified and begins, as far as possible, to resist all adaptation to the growth of the spirit, and thereby even to retard its growth by refusing it room to expand, and forbidding it to seek room elsewhere.

Turning now to theology as such, we must remember that merely intellectual curiosity about the gods and about another world was bound to be wakened early in history by the facts of religion, as well as by the facts of nature, whose governing forces were conceived human-wise and were dealt with accordingly. In the endeavour to answer these childish questionings we have the first germs of theological science. But, in so far as it is a science, theology is but one department of that systematising and unifying of all knowledge by which the understanding turns universal experience to account and makes from it an instrument whereby we can pass from

the near to the distant, from the present to the past and the future, and thus adapt our action to an indefinitely wider view of the world than else were possible. If, "in the intention of nature" (to use a convenient phrase), the purpose of this systematising is practical and directed to a greater fulness and range of life, yet, "in the intention of the individual," the effort is more often stimulated by the interest and pleasure naturally attached to speculation; and men of thought seek to perfect and integrate the system without any very explicit reference to its practical utility in the cause of general progress. Obviously, so important a section of human experience (individual, social, and racial) as is religion must find its place and connection in this synthesis; while the whole of experience (in which this section is included) must raise questions as to the ultimate what, whence, and whither of that totality which are more commonly answered by means of theological conceptions. So far, therefore, as the understanding reflects on the data of religious experience (that is, on the revelation of God as given in the general religious movement in the world), and upon the ultimate problems raised by the totality of all sorts of experience, and then strives to frame a theory of these matters harmonious with the rest of its systematised knowledge, it gives us a theology, Needless to say that like every other science, its tendency is to twist and warp experience by omissions and rearrangements, and even by fictitious additions, into agreement with the schemes, hypotheses, and categories of its predilection; whereas experience always strains against the sides of these bottles, stretches, and at last bursts them.

The same thing happens, though more slowly, to the

totality of our systematised knowledge, which makes for unity in its entire complexus as well as in each of its parts. A revolution in any one such part involves a readjustment of the whole, either as cause or as effect, or as both. Hence the science of theology will be always liable to revolutions according as the accumulation of its own proper sort of experience calls for restatement of its theories and conceptions, and also owing to the progress of the whole complexus of knowledge whereof it is a part or member. Nor will mere patchings and lettings-out suffice; there must be transformations, the dying of form into form—the new containing the old virtually and effectually; explaining as much and far more, but altogether differently, and not merely by an extension of the same principle of explanation. And, side by side with this quasi-organic development of theology, we ought, in an ideal state of things to which we may ever approximate, to find a living and growing creed or body of dogmas and mysteries reflecting and embodying the spiritual growth and development of the community; one, not with the coherence of a logical system and according to the letter-value of its statements and articles, but with the coherence of divers manifestations of one and the same spirit; a living flexible creed that represents the present spiritual needs of the average, the past needs of the more progresive, the future needs of the less progressive members of the Church.

This "revelation," viewed rather as an immediate and natural reflex of experience, nearly equivalent to experience itself, than as (what it also is) a popular and practical explanation of that experience, supplies theological reflection with new subject-matter. Theology, on the other

hand, more even than any other department of general knowledge, furnishes the religious spirit with new living categories for its self-expression in harmony with the general thought of the time. To look for a perfect adequation between two such totally different orders of truth—the prophetic truth of revelation, the scientific truth of theology—is the root-error of theologism. Neither can be independent of the other without paying the penalty of sterility. A revelation that ignores the check of theology, that speaks in a dead language, that uses an obsolete and unintelligible thought-system; a theology that ignores the check of revelation, the continual progressive self-manifestation of God in the religious life of humanity, and seeks Him only in the subhuman—both these are alike fruitless. Neither, however, has any right to trespass on the other's territory, or to hamper its free development on its own lines and according to its own principles. This is what happens whenever revelation asserts itself to be a divine theology and offers its prophetic enigmas as scientific truth, or when theology *en revanche* would force revelation to keep to the lines, methods, and pace of theological development, thus equivalently putting fetters on that religious experience which is its own subject-matter, and cutting off its own food-supply. Thus, however intellectually and theologically untenable, there might be more religious truth, and therefore ultimately more intellectual truth, a fuller, richer, and better embodiment of the divine, in a polytheistic pantheon of personified excellences than in a sterile and possibly non-moral monotheism. Intellectual unification might be purchased at too great a sacrifice of ethico-religious values. Idolatry or heresy, as a merely

theological mistake, is harmless compared with the moral idolatry of the heart. What is intellectually a superstition may not be so ethically or religiously; many a prayer or sacrifice to the true God may be more unworthy and superstitious than those offered to idols. Hence a premature intellectualising or theologising of religious beliefs may be eventually detrimental to theology no less than to religion.

If, therefore, this delimitation of territories, this determination of the true relations of dependence and independence, between revelation and theology, should obtain clearer recognition as time goes on, it will not be due to religion alone, which cares nothing for philosophical interests, but seeks itself everywhere and in all things; nor will it be due merely to philosophical reflection, which cares as little for the interests of religion, and has no patience with revelation and prophetic enigmas. It will be due to the shock and clash of their interests in the soul of man; it will be the work of philosophical reflection originated and stimulated by the religious need. Philosophy will not endure the pretensions of dogmatic theology; religion will not endure the negation of that world-wide experience to which dogmatic theology seeks to give expression.

But at present dogmatic theology holds, as for centuries it has held, the field; it is as old as the "catholicising" of Christianity; it is an important element of that process, and shares, among its other inevitable limitations, its tendency to make law and rule not merely an aid to, but a substitute for, the creative spirit of light and love. As given us in the creeds, and in their orthodox theological extensions,

the Christian revelation retains only a few relics of its original prophetic form of expression, and still fewer traces of influence from the subsequent workings of the prophetic spirit in the Church. Its forms and phrases are partly scriptural, prophetic, evangelical, but mainly theological. Still more, they are the forms of a theology belonging to a bygone and all but obsolete thought-system.

If then the sacredness which they possess as vehicles of prophetic truth, as illustrative or protective of revealed mysteries, be transferred to their theological values and implications; if these also are imposed upon our faith, the result must be fatal both to faith and to theology. Both are tied to the same corpse.

Let us then remember that the discrediting of dogmatic theology is not the discrediting of revelation or of theology; it is not even their divorce *a vinculo*, but simply the establishment of a truer and better relationship between them. The criticism of the creed, in the light of science in general or of theology in particular, cannot touch that religious value which, quite independently of the external history of its origin, it has been proved to possess as an instrument of the spiritual life of the Churches, cannot assail its truth as a prophetic utterance (at least by adoption) of the spirit of Christ and of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. It can and must destroy its illegitimate claim to be a body of premisses for exact theological argumentation, *i.e.* a source of schism and hatred among men rather than of unity and love. Not only will the Churches still retain all their functions as guardians of prophetic or revealed truth, and of a flexible doctrinal

unity analogous to the unity of rites and observances, but, liberated from all the entanglements of an indefensible claim to scientific inerrancy—a claim as obsolete as that to temporal or coercive jurisdiction—will recover their sorely compromised dignity and credit. Moreover, their merely theological divisions, the bitterest fruit of the dogmatic fallacy, will cease to be regarded as differences of faith when the prophetic nature of dogmatic truth is more intelligently recognised. After all, their doctrinal rulings have ever been avowedly in the name of prophecy, not of theology ; as imposed by the spirit, not by theological reasonings. The spiritual authority of the traditional creed, as of the product and expression of the collective religious experience of the community, will ever be needed to waken, foster, and educate the Christian spirit in the individual.

CHAPTER IX

PROPHETIC HISTORY

THIS essay appeared in the *New York Review* of October–November, 1905, under the title, "The Dogmatic Reading of History." It repudiates certain misinterpretations of *Lex Orandi*, sufficiently repudiated, I should have thought, in the Preface to that work. The present title seems to me clearer, and indicates its bearing on the preceding chapter.

Christianity is nothing if not an interpretation of life and history. To suppose that the commentary could be indifferent to the very existence of the text is a patent absurdity; though to suppose that it is not always borne out by the text is certainly permissible.

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The Christian tradition incorporates a certain reading or construction of history with which modern historical criticism finds itself frequently in conflict. To mitigate this conflict some apologists insist plausibly on the comparative indifference of religion to history as such; they point out, for example, that as far as the religious significance is concerned it matters nothing whether Christ's ascent into Heaven be taken as a fact or as a prophetic vision. The same may be said of his

descent into Hell, of his session at the Father's right hand, of His re-descent to judgment; and if we ask: "Why not, therefore, of His resurrection, of His miraculous birth?" their principle provides no answer.

By this method of defence the sceptic is pardonably reminded of that allegorising of popular beliefs or myths which marked the passing of the Homeric faith, or he thinks of the Philonian volatilising of the Old Testament folk-lore. He will agree with the orthodox opponents of the same system that Christianity so interpreted may still have great practical worth as a philosophy in symbol, as a guide to life, as an expression of religious, ethical, and æsthetic ideals, but that it is no longer "historical Christianity."

The orthodox, following the lines of Augustine, and especially of his exegesis of the fourth Gospel, admit (perhaps too readily) that it is the spirit, the religious and moral value, of the Gospel history which quickens; that the flesh, the letter, the history-value, profits nothing; but that nevertheless the flesh is the organ and vehicle and pledge of the spirit; that whatever "might have been" in the abstract, yet in the concrete God has chosen to speak to us by the symbolism of deeds and facts rather than by that of visions and parables. Whence the inevitable conclusion that certain matters of fact and history, as such, belong directly to the very substance of the Christian revelation and are to be believed with divine faith, and if need be in the teeth of criticism, part of whose territory is thus brought under the distinct, and possibly conflicting, jurisdictions of faith and science. In the event of conflict, faith claims precedence; and this claim is vindi-

cated either on "intellectualist" lines, by proving that the testimony of an omniscient and absolutely veracious witness vouches for the facts in question; or on moral lines, by showing that they are inextricably bound up with the sovereign interest of our moral and spiritual life, as part and parcel of the religion by which we live.

Between the new apologists who would save Christianity from the conflict with criticism at the risk of raising it up into the clouds, and those who would treat sacred tradition somewhat profanely as instruments of detailed historical criticism; or, in other words, between those who deny and those who affirm that we can settle historical particulars through divine faith, independently of natural methods, there is, I venture to suggest, a plausible *via media* which ought to be reckoned with.

Although we may have no right to look for a precise, point for point agreement between (what I may call) the "prophetic" reading or construction of history, and the scientific reading of the same; although we may not at once use separate points of sacred tradition as so many historical arguments; yet the truth of Christianity requires that in its entirety the "dogmatic" reading of history should be true to the scientific, in much the same way that the artistic idealisation of an episode, its dramatic or poetic treatment, should be substantially true to fact.

In brief elucidation of this position let me say that by the "scientific reading of history" I mean that determination of the bare order and connection of events in time and place which is prior to all discussion of their inward meaning and connection, and which for

the historian[1] is an end in itself, an independent interest, prosecuted according to the rules of evidence. In "the 'prophetic' reading of history" the arrangement of events is not sought for its own sake, nor according to the principles of scientific history.

That matters of fact are often ascertained otherwise than according to such principles cannot well be denied. Without recourse to the rare and perhaps abnormal phenomena of clairvoyance; or building too much on the apparent divinations of animal instinct; we can point to a faculty of perfectly natural divination in man, a sagacity equivalent to intuition, which enables him, as it were *a priori* and independently of all historico-critical investigation, to determine, with varying measures of inerrancy, matters of fact beyond the range of his direct experience. Nor does it affect my contention to admit that this "feeling" of the truth may be at root an unconscious complex inference from an infinity of unformulated premisses. It is enough that it evades all possibility of critical analysis and justification.

Assuming that the Divine Will is the root and the immanent cause of the whole universe and of the process of human history, a process by which the Ideal,

[1] I am conscious here of using the word "historian" somewhat improperly for one whose science is really subordinate to history, for one who collects the materials out of which historical constructions are to be built and by which they must be criticised and checked. His search requires, no doubt, a philosophy of evidence and therefore of human nature, and is not independent of presuppositions. Nor is the positivist ideal of "objectivity" coherent. Yet the aim of the historical critic is not construction, but the criticism of constructions whether prospective or finished. He tells the historian proper what materials are sound, what suspicious or worthless.

"that which ought to be," is endeavouring gradually to realise itself, it follows that a perfectly sympathetic understanding of "that which ought to be" applied to an adequate information as to existing facts and conditions would serve as a principle of historical divination as to the past and the future; and that the said divination becomes fallible just in the measure that sympathy with the Divine Will (the Ought-Judgment) or information as to existing conditions (the Fact-Judgment) is defective. Every Ought-Judgment is of course relative to certain hypothetical facts and conditions, whose existence and reality is the object of the Fact-Judgment.

From the strictly historico-critical standpoint the inference from the Ideal to the Actual; from what ought to have happened, to what did happen; is as irrelevant as any other sort of divination or prophecy. Yet perhaps no other form of divination has had more to do with the reconstruction of the past in pre-critical times. In the realm of hagiography its licence has been almost unfettered; and there accordingly its methods are best studied. Thus we have *a priori* biographies of the Virgin, of St. Joseph, or St. Anne, etc., written in all good faith, with no conscious mendacity—though doubtless with no adequate sense of the requirements of truth. Starting with certain fixed dogmatic assumptions and with certain unquestioned devout sentiments, the writer arranges and supplements the loose conflicting traditions he finds to hand in accordance with what his religion and his conscience tell him *ought* to have happened.

The actual worthlessness of such legends does not

affect the contention that, were the Ought-Judgments and the Fact-Judgments correct, the inferences from them would be valid; and that it is only because such correctness is never attainable, that *a priori*, or prophetic, history can never yield certainty in matters of detail, but must always be subject to historical criticism. The cogency of the "*potuit; decuit; ergo fecit*" argument (God could; God ought; and therefore God did) is undeniable—if only the premisses be verified.

When we turn to that religious reading of history which is incorporated in the Christian Tradition, it must be observed in the first place that the errors and deficiencies of the prophetic spirit in the individual are in a great measure eliminated in a divination determined by, and proceeding from, the collective spirit of the entire religious community; and that this latter possesses all the authority of collective over individual experience. Nor is it only the Ought-Judgment but also the Fact-Judgment that is thus raised in value. Let us call this more or less authoritative divination the "dogmatic" reading of history, to distinguish it from that of the private individual. With a very important difference, its relation to the critical reading of history is analogous to that of an artistic or dramatic rendering of some verifiable episode. We should not go to Shakespeare to determine some disputed point of history relating to the reign of John or of Richard III or of Henry VIII. Yet we recognise these plays as avowed idealisations, in the dramatic interest, of presupposed matters of fact; and this, with no certain internal principles of distinction between the facts and the idealisation by which they are transfused. These facts are told us not strictly as they

did happen, but rather as they *ought* to have happened had the dramatist been guiding history solely in the interest of drama. We recognise that interest as a principle of bias, of historical falsification, in the cause of greater dramatic truth. We know that correspondence with the bare order and external connection of events in time and place is quite a secondary, subordinate end; that the dramatic and the historic interests are different and at times hostile; that it is for the historian alone, by means of extrinsic criteria, to draw the line between the matter idealised and the idealisation. The result therefore is a substantial, or *in globo*, correspondence which renders all inference from dramatic to historical particulars formally invalid, but allows us to speak rightly of these plays as historical.

But whereas the poet, painter, or dramatist knows very well that history is not guided primarily in the artistic interest, and that he has no right whatever to attach any historical value to the idealisation postulated by his art, or to argue from the æsthetic "ought" to the historical fact, the man of religious faith and hope rightly believes that the process of events is shaped ultimately in the interests of morality and religion, and that "what ought to be", so far as it is judged rightly, is identical with what is, has been, or will be. His uncertainty is as to the purity of his ideals and his acquaintance with the existing facts; not as to the general principle. If his interpretation is wrong he feels that it is saved in, and transcended by, the truth, as far as its religious value is concerned; an assurance which the dramatist in analogous circumstances has no business to feel. Hence his comparative recklessness, his

sense of being under rather than over the religious truth of the matter; his too easy indifference to the rights of history. The motive of the "prophetic" idealisation of history is, of course, religious and not artistic; it is the effect of hope; of the wish to believe; of a too impatient desire to see God's Will already done on earth as it is in heaven; to trace His presence and operation everywhere; to give a premature completeness to those designs which are spread out over the immensities of time and place, far beyond the compass of our narrow experience.

If, in the imperative interests of truth and therefore eventually of religion itself, this dogmatic reading of history needs to be continually opposed and corrected by historical criticism, yet on the other hand the mere sequence and external connection of events is barren of all fruit for human life without such a key to their inward truth and meaning as it is the office of religion to furnish; so that the "prophetic" and the critical readings of history are needed to check and complete one another, each in its own order of truth.

For if superfluous and largely ineffectual as a guide to the external connection of events, the "prophetic" reading of history reaches a deeper order of truth, not merely in spite of, but because of, and through, its partial infidelity to bare fact, just as drama so often does. By his infidelities to fact the poet or dramatist gets at the secret heart of life, at the immanent spirit or will which seeks to objectify itself in the histories of men and peoples; and yet never finds adequate utterance therein. To seize the idea imperfectly uttered in facts and to give it more adequate utterance is the work

of the artist. To be true to the idea he must be untrue to the facts. For the knowledge of "man," as distinct from knowledge "about men," Schopenhauer very rightly commends us to poetry rather than to history; to the dramatic rather than to the critical historian.[1]

Owing to the narrowness of even our widest critical outlook and to the partial character of even the fullest evidence attainable, the true inward meaning and import of history may at any given moment be not only obscured from us, but perverted altogether, very much as may the sense of a sentence prior to its completion; or as the beauty of a sculptured figure arrested at some grotesque stage of its fashioning. In such case when the bias of Faith and Hope falsifies facts in order to make them a truer vehicle and expression of their inward meaning, it proceeds by a method directly inverse to that of the critic; and yet not without a justification analogous to that of artistic bias. Apologetic zeal, of the old-fashioned discursive sort, delighted in childishly one-sided arrangements of evidence from Nature in proof of the Goodness and Wisdom of God. However false to external facts, this idealisation was truer to the deeper realities than perhaps a more critical presentment of the available evidence would have been. "Good" people have always delighted in moral rather than in veracious readings of history; in moral tales of virtue steadily rewarded and vice ever put to confusion. They have striven at all times to interpret history in all its details as evidence of a moral government, and have tried to anticipate the Day of Judgment; to construct systems of Divine Justice out of

[1] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.* Drittes Buch, § 51.

the chaos of difficulties and perplexities offered by the spectacle of human life.

As fact-truth all such results may be ludicrously inadequate; as ought-truth or ideal-truth they may be, and mostly have been, far truer than an exact statement of available fact-truth could have been.

And so of what I called the "prophetic" reading of history incorporated in the Christian Tradition—the idealisation of facts effected by specifically Christian faith and hope in the collective mind of the communion of the faithful. As fact-truth, it is necessarily defective in detail in the interests of ought-truth, and it is for criticism gradually to determine the limits between the idealised matter and its idealisation. There have been and there may yet be many capitulations to criticism on the part of theology; and yet the theologian will be justified in holding to the substantial fact-truth of the "prophetic" reading of history. Between such beliefs as that in the existence and crucifixion of Christ on the one hand, and that in his session at the Father's right hand on the other, there are some whose exact degree of fact-truth may be matter of long and bitter dispute; but we can rest assured that their religious truth is proof against all assaults, and that they are organically one with a creed whose incorporated reading of history is substantially true to the facts of time as well as to eternal realities. Is there not after all some danger in the abstract or methodic articulation of the creed; in treating each several, or rather severed, member of the organism as an independent object of faith, instead of finding that object in the whole presentment of God and man and Christ, and their relations as set

forth mystically, and therefore with some avowed degree of inexactness in the entire complexus of beliefs? And if it seems that we must determine certain fact-truths to be necessary elements of the historical core or substance of the Creed, let us distinguish carefully between "the substance of Christianity"—and "the substance of some particular theologian's statement of Christianity"—for the two are by no means coincident. A particular theological construction may be ruined by a negation which leaves God on his throne unmoved: nor did the stars fall with the Ptolemaic system. In conclusion, the view here put forward, if not quite a truism, cannot claim to be new in substance or otherwise than in mode or emphasis; for we are already implicity committed to the principles on which it rests. In dealing with the fact-value of the Messianic predictions, in pointing out their subsequent historical verification, we have always been content with a substantial, or *in globo* correspondence between the prophecy and its fulfilment; we have allowed for the idealisation of the prophetic spirit; we have admitted the right of historical criticism to determine the precise fact-value of those utterances; we have never dared to assert a point for point agreement between the enigmatic vision and the subsequent events. When we consider that the authority of the Creed is, on our own confession, that of a revelation, of a prophetic reading of history, shaped by a Christian sense of "what ought to be," and is not that of historico-critical principles, it is plainly indifferent whether the prophetic history relates to the past or to the future—to the story of the Creation, or to the story of the final

consummation—as far as its fact-value and interpretation are concerned.

Still it will always be for the Church herself to determine what is or is not of the *substance* of her "dogmatic" reading of history. Belief in herself as an historical religion implies her assurance that there are parts of her traditional history against which criticism will, as a fact, never prevail. Yet this assurance is grounded in faith, not in historical criticism. Were she, for the time, worsted by the latter on its own ground and with its own weapons, yet she could not yield without suicide, but must wait for criticism to correct itself. A complete indifference to and independence of all abstractly conceivable results of criticism is impossible on the part of a religion that claims to be historical.

CHAPTER X

THE CORPORATE MIND

THIS essay appeared in the *New York Review*, of August-September, 1905, under the title, *Consensus Fidelium.* Its bearing on the general position maintained in this volume is sufficiently obvious to need no further elucidation. To make the collective mind of the Christian community the supreme rule of Christian faith would be to sanction infinite superstition and folly, if we made no distinction between the community and the crowd, the people and the populace. This point has been dwelt on also in the second chapter.

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Father Delehaye, S.J., the Bollandist, has lately given us, within the compass of 264 pages, a work of far deeper significance than appears at first sight.[1] The days of that specialism that spreads itself over the boundless wilderness of detail and loses all interest in the whole are fortunately gone by. Investigation and experiment are pursued only for the sake of induction. Else they are held to be dilettante idlings, as aimless as the busy hoardings of a miser. Here at last, in these

[1] *Les Legendes Hagiographiques*, par Hippolyte Delehaye, S.J. Bureau des Bollandistes, Bruxelles, 1905.

pages, we cull the ripe fruit of the protracted collective labours of the learned compilers of the *Acta Sanctorum*, and are presented with inductions bearing directly indeed on hagiography, but indirectly on history in general, on theology, on philosophy.

It is with one of these indirect but more deeply and widely important bearings of the subject that I purpose to deal; namely, with the question, which will be forced on every reflective reader of the book, as to the trustworthiness of general or popular tradition as an instrument of education, as a witness and guardian of truth. In defence of the social and ecclesiastical, as opposed to the individualistic, idea of Christianity we rightly appeal to the analogy of general education and lay stress on the absolute insufficiency of the separate mind, and on its dependence on "authority," on the collected and communised experience of past generations, as preserved for it in the inherited language, opinions, beliefs, traditions, customs of the society into which it is born. But when we turn to M. G. Le Bon's book—*Psychologie des Foules*—which Father Delehaye quotes more than once, and of which his own is an elaborate and eloquent illustration, it might seem that this apologetic weapon bends in our hand. For the analogy, to have any value, must apply to tradition as tradition, and not as supernatural. But if the influence of popular tradition is rather a necessity than an advantage; if it is more often for evil than for good, for darkness than for light, there might seem to be a good case for individualism.

The "Crowd-psychology" of M. Le Bon deals primarily with the mob, the multitude in assembly; but its strictures are largely applicable to such a "crowd"

as Father Delehaye has in eye,—the crowd that weaves the legends of saints and heroes; that shapes the purely receptive mind of the uneducated, unreflecting units of which it is composed.

Now the "mentality" of the crowd is, we are shown, of a deplorably inferior character to that of its units. It is not that of the lowest of them, still less of the highest; nor that of the majority; nor that of the average; but something quite different, if not contrary, in kind. It is not a resultant or combination of their conscious thoughts and opinions, of their ordinary moods, sentiments and purposes, but something as different from that as a man's hypnotic self is from his normal self. In moments of very great abstraction our action is often controlled by long-buried and forgotten habits; as, with the very aged, the past self displaces the present in consciousness. So, the swarming, buzzing, gossiping crowd hypnotises itself; individual differences of normal mentality are put to sleep, and what surges up uniformly into the consciousness of all and binds them into one, is really the buried mentality of a past stage of civilisation, something relatively childish, barbarous, savage.

And perhaps the secret of this transformation is to be found in that act by which, sometimes quite unconsciously, we merge ourselves into a crowd and suffer ourselves to be engulfed and swept along by it; an act of faith in the faith of others, whose faith again is one of the same kind; a resignation of our responsibility and thereby of our personality and morality. For it is not numbers that make the crowd. The crowd may exist in essence where but two or three are gathered together;

or even where they are but morally united in their local dispersion. Let each singly hold the rest responsible in any matter, and the result is *a group in which no one is responsible*—an impersonal non-moral agency, a collective mind and feeling, subject to no controlling will, or sense of responsibility.

Hence, the entirely impersonal character of the crowd, or of the individual, while under its influence; as impersonal as a pack of wolves, or a flock of sheep. Its action may be heroic or criminal, viewed externally; but inwardly, it is neither moral nor immoral; for its collective will is a fiction; its individual wills are paralysed. Responsibility may rest with the demagogue who understands it and "plays" it as the angler plays and fools the fish; but, as leader, he is not of, but outside the crowd. The crowd is as non-moral as a dreamer. Hence, too, its unthinking mechanical responsiveness to forcible "suggestion"; the subjection of its judgment to the force of bare, unsupported, and especially of assiduously reiterated, affirmation; to the tyranny of "advertisement" in every form. Gregarious, imitative as a flock of sheep, it is the prey of panics, moods, fashions, fancies of which no one of its members could furnish a rational account; all leap at the same spot, yet none knows why; the faith of each is in the faith of all the rest. The poverty of its mind is notorious. Images reign supreme. Principles and ideas in the strict sense it has none; only their empty husks, the now discarded formulas, phrases, catchwords in which they once lived. Like all narrow minds the crowd-mind is intolerant, extreme, fanatical, impatient of many-sided, well-balanced judgments. Like a child,

the crowd confounds facts and fancies, subjective and objective, in all simplicity. Uniformly mendacious in a negative, non-moral sense, its testimony as a witness is immeasurably worse than worthless; for it can neither see right, nor say right.

But there are crowds and crowds. And though the relative distance of the crowd to the rear of the sane intelligence of any place or time must be practically the same, yet within the limits of its essential laws the crowd-mind is capable of advance and is towed along slowly and from afar in the wake of civilisation. It can no more be forced and hurried by the conscious efforts of lawgivers, educators, and preachers, than the growth of a child's stature can be hastened by "taking thought." Sentiments, ideas, and institutions for which it is not yet ready, lie on its surface as seed by the wayside.

Severe as M. Le Bon's estimate of the crowd-mind may be, it is fairly borne out by the evidence Father Delehaye's book affords of its influence, be it noted, precisely as an instrument of *religious* tradition and education. Sterile, senseless, tasteless, dead to all living principles and ideas, to all deeper and inward values of religion and morality, the crowd-mind can receive the Saint only on condition of forcing him into some one or other of its familiar traditional hero-categories; and how purely external, unspiritual and materialistic its notion of heroism is, we all know. Its unchecked influence in the cultus of the Saints is always and everywhere corrupt and debasing; dragging the Saints down to its own mental and moral level. And in liturgical matters, in our prayers, hymns, devotions, pictures, decorations, music, religious art; in our moral and

ascetical tradition; in the whole mentality of our religion, who can deny that the influence of the crowd-mind is altogether decadent and retrograde?

Yet some talk as though the Church made it her sovereign standard,—a rule, imposed by Popes and Councils, to the crushing out of all individuality and distinction. They will quote the widespread popularity of a cult, a belief, a devotion as unambiguous evidence of its soundness:—"*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*"

Plainly what we need is a careful distinction between the Christian populace (or crowd) and the Christian people; between uncontrolled tradition and controlled.

The "authority" of the crowd-mind over the individual has, indeed, its legitimate use and function; but the limits that separate its use from its abuse are soon reached. It is exercised and submitted to instinctively; being a natural rather than an artificial institution—as natural as are the parental and filial sentiments. Like all such instincts, its purpose is the more or less material welfare of the individual and the race; and it is efficacious for that end alone, and only under ordinary circumstances and as a general rule. Used for higher ends it becomes, in the same measure, an instrument of destruction. The authority of the crowd-tradition concerns the first and humblest and most universal necessities of social life. It lifts us, as we all must be lifted, to its own level; but it can lift us no further. Our nurse cannot always be our pope. For higher educational ends, artifice has to come to the relief of Nature. For the crowd is not society, but a factor in society—its raw material; nor is the crowd-mind identical with the public mind. Spontaneously, in

regard to every interest or department of culture, society falls into classes—the progressive and the stationary, the active and the receptive, the original and the imitative. Needless to say, the original are few and the imitative many, for "many are called but few are chosen" is the law of Nature. But the law of Grace, if not also of rational Nature, is that the few are for the sake of the many; and those that have, for the service of those that have not. *Confirma fratres* is the command imposed upon them by their gifts. The Greek ideal of an aristocracy preying on a serf-class failed because it did not rise above the law of mere animal nature, the law of egotistic competition. In a deeper sense, then, it is "natural" that the crowd-mind should be slowly educated, raised and controlled by the influence of the active-minded and progressive minority. But it is just here that artifice and the conscious organisation of society can do so much to accelerate this natural process. Mediating between these two sections of society—the progressive and the inert—we soon find a system of educational machinery, whose function it is to bring the active-minded into communication, to focus the scattered rays of their light, to collect and to distribute among the many the assured results of their co-operative labour. As of "middlemen," it is the office of teachers and educators to break the bread of knowledge to the multitudes, that is, to distribute it in small doses; to translate, symbolise, accommodate; to recognise that what is absolutely less true or less right may be relatively more true and more right; not to force growth, but to know and obey its laws. As a class, there is something of the crowd and the crowd-

mind about them; for they are depositaries and guardians of a tradition. But it is a tradition of which each is, at least professedly (though by no means actually), a competent critic. He believes because he has seen; his faith is not supposed to be merely in the faith of others; he has not discovered, but he has verified. It is a tradition for which each holds himself responsible, and it is, therefore, not a crowd-tradition.

We must not suppose that the official teaching-class is authoritative only in relation to the mentally inert multitudes; or that it is itself simply passive and receptive in relation to the active-minded minority. As holding in possession the accepted results of the best work done so far, it is, up to a certain stage, the teacher of its teachers. No one is fit to teach it who has not first been taught by it; who has not assimilated, before he has attempted to modify and perfect, the tradition of which it is the depositary.

On the other hand, the official teaching-class may easily degenerate and take on some of the characteristics of the crowd. It may, and often does, stiffly resist all modification and perfection of its tradition, and so cut itself off from the very sources of its life and fruitfulness. And it may, in consequence, try to rule the minority and the multitude by exactly the same methods, with the eventual result of losing credit and influence with both. Or, worse still, by a complete inversion of its function, it may become an instrument by which the crowd-mind is imposed on the minority, and "Folly, doctor-like," assumes the control of skill. But these are perversions of an institution whose general utility and excellence is beyond question.

When, therefore, we argue against individualism in faith, and in favour of ecclesiastical consensus and tradition, we should be careful to draw our analogy, not from the tradition of the crowd, but from that of the official teaching-class. And, among ourselves, when we appeal to its popularity in favour of a usage or belief, we should consider whether the source of this popularity is from above or from below; for, in the latter case, we do not win an argument, but raise an objection.

It is certainly no detriment to our belief in the Church's supernatural character to see how closely the analogy between her constitution and that of civilised society may be pressed. Onwards, from the day that she put forth her canonical Gospels to check the mythologising process that gave us the essentially "vulgar" apocryphal gospels, her teaching-class has striven assiduously to bring the crowd-mind under the purifying and elevating influence of her minority—of her Saints and Doctors. Her official hierarchy has existed to gather, dispense, and communise the gifts and graces of her charismatic hierarchy; to collect the wealth of the rich and scatter it among the poor. While regarding the connection between personal gifts and ecclesiastical office as a desideratum, she has never admitted it to be essential; the teacher need not be a discoverer, nor the dispenser a producer. Thus she avoids that encouragement of hypocrisy which is given when office is supposed to be the guarantee of personal gifts of insight and holiness; and yet at the same time secures those public advantages of a teaching-class which Quakerism, with its purely charismatic hierarchy, would forfeit.

For all its concrete difficulties and limitations, we can hardly imagine any other system by which the religious education of mankind could be carried out on a large scale. The crowd and the crowd-mind will always be with us; not as something to acquiesce in or to defer to; but as something to combat, to purify, to elevate. Father Delehaye's book should make it impossible for us to confound Catholic folklore with Catholic teaching, or with the *Consensus Fidelium.*

CHAPTER XI

REVELATION

IN many instances I have laid stress on the distinction between prophetic and theological language; and on the danger of deducing conclusions from avowedly figurative utterances. In the following essay, hitherto unpublished, I try to give greater precision to the conception of prophetic language, and to show that it differs from theological not merely as a poetical from a prosaic statement of the same truth—in which case theology would be its very substance and kernel—but rather as a fact of religious experience differs from the analysis of its cause and significance—in which case revelation is to theology what the stars are to astronomy; or what ontological truth is to logical truth. The success or failure of the analysis leaves the fact untouched.

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The distinction between Theology and Revelation, the determination of their respective rights and limits, and of their relation of mutual dependence, are matters of ever growing importance. It is now generally felt that their entanglement is fatal to both interests; that

Revelation is thereby subjected to all the vicissitudes, uncertainties, and contradictions of theological speculation; that Theology is fettered in its free growth and development by the finality and divine authority which consecrate oracular and prophetic utterances. To some extent the cause in question, the principle at stake, is closely akin to that involved in the problem of the relations of Church and State. In both cases, the divorce is desired by each party in its own interest, and is assumed to be a far more simple and satisfactory solution than it really is. It is too readily supposed that wedded organisms which have grown together for centuries and lived a common life can be abruptly cleft asunder without any danger of bleeding to death. Because we have arrived at a more or less satisfactory distinction in the abstract, where formerly all was blurred and confused, we hasten to effect a separation in the concrete, as though thought were exhaustive of reality.

It is, however, rather from the side of religion than from that of philosophy that the divorce of Revelation from Theology is apt to be too eagerly precipitated. It is a case of lightening an endangered vessel by throwing the cargo overboard. Panic is not content with a measured and discriminating rejection, but recklessly wholesale in its sacrifices to safety, and may easily part with the necessary minimum of ballast. It may be that when we have sifted revelation of its theological implications we shall find our sieve empty of all residue. If it is true that theology but translates revelation from its imaginative into conceptual or intellectual language, it may be also urged that revelation

translates theology into terms of sense and imagination, that religion is but popularised theology, that the substance and reality and truth are to be sought in the intellectual concepts, not in their imaginative expression. May it not be that theology just gets under the popular form of revelatlon to its solid core of intellectual truth, that it cracks the shell and picks out the kernel? That *e.g.* behind the more or less human mask of Fatherhood it detects Ultimate Causality, Plenitude of Being, and so forth? In that case, to sift out the implicit theology were to sift out the whole content of revelation—of what were, then, merely a symbolised theology. Above all, is not this wholesale severance of Church and State, of Revelation and Theology, perfectly chimerical? Can it ever be that a Christian should be so indifferent to theology as to profess Materialism, or Atheism, or Pantheism while holding the Faith in all its integrity? And if not, how can we deny that Revelation, directly or indirectly, fetters his theological liberty, and requires him to take account of Divine oracles in his search after philosophical truth? Or how can we blame or limit the world-old interference of priests with the liberties of philosophical speculation?

Yet, on the other hand, a certain spiritual equalising or levelling of all men in the matter of Faith and Religion, is an essential and distinctive feature of Christianity, whose truth is hid from the wise and prudent and revealed to little ones, not by flesh and blood, but by the common Father who is in Heaven. That the gifts of Faith and Grace should be conditioned by anything so uncertain, so variable, so monopolised by an intellectual aristocracy as philosophical orthodoxy, is hardly con-

sistent with the spirit and desire of its Founder. It may be that His desire held an inherent though unobserved contradiction; yet at least His sympathies were seemingly in favour of a divorce between Theology and Revelation. Nor is it accordant with the Gospel-spirit to allow that the philosopher as such should possess a spiritual advantage over the peasant; or a cultured over a barbarous age or people. "Look at your elect," writes Paul, "how there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many great, not many noble, but the foolish things of this world hath God chosen that He may confound the wise." This is essentially the keynote of Christianity, and would seem to make its frequent lapses into "intellectualism" as manifestly discordant with its spirit as its no less frequent lapses into worldliness and moral corruption. Can we then say that philosophical orthodoxy is a necessary condition of Faith? That we must convert a man to Aristotle or to Plato, or from Kant, or from Spencer, before we can convert him to Christ?

What then? Shall we say that Christianity labours under an inherent contradiction; that the divorce of Theology from Revelation is at once essential to it and yet impossible; that its lapses into intellectualism are the inevitable fruit of the contradictory and utopian idea of a free Revelation and a free Theology, side by side in the same mind? Here, then, it would seem we have another case of the old fallacy of abstraction; another attempt to split up the organic unity of human life with a hatchet into fragments that are expected to survive the operation, and to live all the more fruitfully for it.

I have elsewhere considered the problem more from

the side of Theology; I purpose now to approach it more from the side of Revelation; to ask myself what I mean by Revelation; what are its rights and its limits with respect to Theology.

First, I notice that the word is used primarily to denote an experience, and derivatively to denote the record or expression by which that experience is retained and communicated to others. For us the Revelation of St. John is but the record of an experience; for him it was an experience. St. Stephen saw the Heavens opened; we are but told that he saw them opened. To him they were revealed, to us it is only revealed that they were revealed. Here at once is an important distinction strangely slurred over, which raises the question, Can Revelation be communicated? Can I believe on the strength of God's word to another? Can such belief be (in defiance of logic) stronger than my purely human faith in the veracity of that other? Must not God speak to me directly? Must He not, at least from within, illuminate the revelation thus verbally communicated to me by another; and bring it home to me with a super-rational intuitive certitude? Must not Conscience—God's Vicar—make the message its own, and command the homage of my Faith?

Putting aside this question, and taking Revelation in its primary sense, as an experience, I first notice that as far as etymology and even common usage are concerned, it seems to imply the sudden dropping of a veil, or lifting of a mist, or the lightening-flash glimpse of a landscape at night. "It came to me as a revelation," we say; but hardly, "It dawned upon me as a revelation." Abruptness, discontinuity with the ordinary

process of knowledge is its usual (perhaps not essential) characteristic.

Again, we discover or find out by seeking, by voluntary use of our natural faculties. Revelation comes to us unsought; it is given to us, or happens to us. Sometimes its object is altogether new; sometimes it is old, familiar, use-worn but struck with a sudden sunbeam, lit up with a new light. "Startling," "Strange," "Sensational," are the terms by which our news-sheets qualify revelations. If there was no preceding mystery or problem, there was at least a tranquil unsuspicion which has been rudely disturbed.

Revelation is not merely of what is hidden, but of what is improbable or even incredible. Too often, however, we speak of "revealed mysteries" as though revelation as such proposed riddles instead of solving them. It may do so incidentally, but not formally as revelation. A revealed mystery ceases to be a mystery, just as a revealed secret ceases to be a secret, so far as it is revealed. The answer to one question may of course raise another, and the revelation of one mystery may create another; but the end and purpose of revelation is to kill, not to create, mystery; to enable us at least to see through a glass darkly, not to hinder us from seeing face to face.

When the subject-matter is religious, when it relates to the other world, revelation means knowledge conveyed in a miraculous or at least supernatural or extraordinary manner. It is used in contradistinction to that knowledge of divine things which is acquired through reflection on the phenomena of nature, or on the laws and uniformities of movement and life and thought; from

all that is sometimes called "Natural Theology." Proficiency in this latter depends on breadth of experience coupled with philosophical acumen; whereas the simplest and most ignorant may be the recipient of Revelation. If we speak of Science or of Nature as a Divine Revelation we use the word in a derived and improper sense.

So much may suffice for the verbal definition. It enables us at once to distinguish Revelation from "Natural Theology," from that knowledge of divine things which the mind, by its own labour and reflection, derives from the observed uniformities of man and of nature. But it also enables us to distinguish it from that "supernatural" or "dogmatic" theology,—so called, not because it is any less the work of natural reason than any other branch of philosophy, but because Revelation and the data of Revelation constitute the subject-matter of its reflection. Dogmatic Theology supposes Revelation; but the converse is not true. As a rule, religions begin with revelation and end with doctrine or theology; just as art-theory and criticism are the reflection of an uncreative period on the creations of the Past. "Religion," says Stade,[1] "is the sense (*Empfindung*) of, and the converse with, superhuman beings. Only so far as this gives birth to a social organisation and a constructive view of life does it result in Doctrine. Even in those religions where this result obtains, usages and institutions play a larger part in the religious life than doctrine does." This sense of the superhuman world issuing in, or inspiring, an imaginative construction of the same is something given to man. His power of creation is as little self-

[1] *Biblische Theolog.* d. A.T. Bd. I, s. ii.

earned as his power of generation. His causal action in both cases is instrumental rather than principal, and implies a maximum of passivity, a minimum of deliberation and design. Theology, on the other hand, as the science or systematic knowledge of the divine, *i.e.* of ultimate metaphysical realities, is essentially a human elaboration of the most artificial description, uncertain in proportion to its abstractness, and apprehensible only by a small minority of philosophical specialists. The precise relation of Theology to Revelation, however, can only be determined after we have formed some clearer idea not only of what the word "Revelation" stands for, but of what the thing itself really is.

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Without adding to the myriad definitions of religion, let us accept that above quoted from Stade as at least a just description of what seems common to all the religions that have of later years been made the subject of comparative study by such writers as Tiele and Jastrow. It is a sense of superhuman beings with whom man can enter into practical relations. Forthwith there arises some imaginative picturing of these beings and of the world they inhabit, and of their relation to man and to this world. And on this picturing are founded the usages and practices by which these beings can be pleased and bought over to man's ends. In the interests of such knowledge and service, associations and institutions spring up later; and with the growth of general culture they are developed, and finally a theory or doctrine of the whole system becomes an exigency of the mind, and tends in its turn to shape the system to itself.

From the first faint dawn of reason man feels himself part of a greater Whole, to which he must adjust himself as a matter of life or death. And yet he is sensible of infinite blindness and feebleness. He stands on a little islet of "the known" in the boundless ocean of "the unknown," and his power is precisely coterminous with his knowledge. Between these two realms of Known and Unknown, he feels dimly that there is close continuity, solidarity, dependence. Here we have the root of the universal dualism of earth and heaven; visible and invisible; matter and spirit; here and hereafter; time and eternity. To people and furnish that Beyond is the first effort of religious imagination—to interpret the limitless Unknown in terms of that infinitesimal fraction of the Whole which falls under man's clear knowledge—magnifying, eliminating, adapting, according to the measure of his cultivation. Quickly he peoples that Beyond with gods, one or many, conflicting or hierarchically unified—gods whom man must not anger or offend, but please and propitiate so as to have them on his side in the battle of life; just as he wants the elements, the forces of Nature, nay, the animals and plants on his side, and tries to understand them and manage them. Indeed, these latter are his gods till he suspects something behind them in whose hands they are. To please the gods he must do what they want, and what that is he can only judge from his own highest wants and ideals. His gods will have all that he lacks and longs for—brute strength, cunning, wisdom, pleasure, immortality. His own needs are the mould in which their images are cast. As long as he is contentedly selfish, idle, animal, cruel, vindictive, vainglorious, his

gods will be the same, and will be pleased by what ministers to their vices. But when he grows dissatisfied with himself and strives to become moral, and spiritual and inwardly unified, he tends towards the conception and worship of one divine love, which wills and seeks not itself, but man's moral and spiritual development, and towards the recognition of the dictate of Conscience as being in its absoluteness, its universality, its indifference to self-interests, the Will of the Whole asserting itself in the consciousness of the part.

It is at this point that the converging streams of religious and moral development flow together, and recognise that they have one end as well as one source. Not merely is religion moralised, but morality is "religionised," and its roots in eternity laid bare. Of the two results, perhaps this is the more important for life, which wins a new depth and tone when morality imposes itself explicitly as the Will of the Eternal; as the highest law of our being because the highest law of all being; as a life which is common to ourselves and to God, and is the bond of union between all spirits and the Divine Spirit. Far from a substitution of morality for religion, we have here a subsumption of morality under religion; though plainly religion here first attains its true character. Morality relates us unconsciously and implicitly to God, but the fulness of our spirit-life demands that this self-relating should be fully conscious and explicit, and it is religion that makes it so; or rather, such conscious self-relating to God is an act of religion. Without the express consciousness of such dynamic union and harmony, man feels adrift like a straw on the ocean of existence; he has no sense of

permanence, or reality, or significance. He needs, however vaguely, to feel himself linked on to the Alpha and the Omega—to that which is everywhere and always, and not merely here and now, like himself. He wants to feel a vested interest in the whole world and its fate. For there is a timeless, spaceless Self in him that revolts against the limits of his organic individual Self, and cannot rest but in a conscious relation to the Universal and Eternal. This is a spiritual need, perfectly distinct from man's moral need. It is his mystical need; the need which any sort of religion satisfies to some degree. In its lowest and meanest forms and perversions, and prior to all ethical interests whatsoever—as mere sorcery, magic, devil-worship, ghost-worship—religion caters for this groping instinct. We must not too hastily sweep aside all this pseudo-mysticism as void of significance. At least it manifests some discontent with our finitude, some belief in the transcendental, some desire to peer through the veil that separates the Known from the Unknown; some sense that the world of clear knowledge is not enough for us, that the eye is not filled with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Men are at once terrified and fascinated by any apparent contact with that other world; they long to see ghosts, yet dread to see them; invoke them, yet fly from them. They cannot leave the veil alone, but are ever lifting a corner or seeking a rift to catch a terrified glimpse of what, after all, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived—of what no man could face and live. For between the psychic and the spiritual in man there is an unstable equilibrium; there is a struggle of attraction with repulsion, of love with terror. "What have I to do

with thee? Art thou come to torment me?" is ever the cry of Sense against Conscience, of Flesh against Spirit, of ailing and enthralled Nature against the healing and redeeming Supernatural. If the spirit in us feels its affinity with the Eternal and the Immense, the flesh cries out in fear and pain; for "flesh and blood cannot possess the Kingdom of God; nor corruption, incorruption." The blind, psychic Self has no sympathy with the Universal Whole, but would drag all to its own ends and uses, and dreads the Spiritual Self, with its stern discipline of disinterested Love, as a wayward child dreads the schoolmaster and his rod. Here, then, is the root of that sense of kinship and strangeness, of longing and terror, which accompanies the pseudo-mystical experiences of rudimentary religion. Yet between them and the experiences of Christian Saints and ecstatics there is at least a generic unity. The difference is one of intellectual and ethical level; of truer conceptions and sentiments concerning that unknown Beyond to which we need to relate ourselves consciously, in order to escape from the felt limitation of our lower, psychic, or organic selves. The mystical need, like the moral need, is one and the same spiritual driving-force throughout. It is in its guidance and direction alone, that development takes place.

We may, then, regard the moral impulse and the mystical impulse as two closely related essential factors of man's spiritual constitution which together make up what for convenience we shall call his "religious faculty" or capacity. This natural faculty is just as much susceptive of cultivation, guidance, and improvement as is his

intelligence or his social instinct, or his affections and passions. The strength of the impulse to do right may not be stronger in cultivation than in savagery; but it is better directed. Man progresses in his *understanding* of what is right, of what is true, of what is lovable and beautiful and adorable; but not necessarily in the force of his impulses in these directions. On the contrary, within certain limits, advance in refinement and form is often at the cost of force. Religion is more intense in its earlier stages; art languishes in a reflective and critical period; the social sense is deeper in more primitive communities; moral heroism has perhaps achieved most under ruder ethical codes.

The "religious faculty" is the subject-matter of religion—the part of man's spirit which religion has to educate and develop. It is the *point d'appui*, the hook by which the supernatural is linked on to the natural. If supernatural revelation is an enlightenment of the spirit, there must be in us a capacity of enlightenment, which if it does not absolutely demand revelation is at least susceptible of it and proportioned to it.[1]

We do ill to look on Conscience as purely "formal," as merely an impulse to believe what seems true and to do what seems right, but as in no wise capable of determining what is true or what is right, This is to treat it as a faculty apart from the ethical and religious reason; whereas it is simply the same faculty viewed as divinely obligatory and authoritative. Besides the compulsiveness of the laws of thought, there is an instinctive com-

[1] To deny all commensurability of the two orders involves absurdity. If the natural man needs to be supernaturally disposed in order to be proportioned to the supernatural, we are involved in a vicious circle.

pulsiveness which tells us that the spirit has found the truth even when reason is silent or contradictory; which at times even refuses the seemingly valid results of ethical or theological reasoning. There is an "appetitus rationalis" in man to which truth and right appeal as infallibly as healthy food appeals to a healthy man in spite of all physiological reasoning to the contrary. Conscience, as Newman rightly saw, is revelational, not merely negatively but positively. Because man *is* part and parcel of the spiritual world and of the supernatural order; because in God he lives and moves and has his being, the truth of religion is in him implicitly, as surely as the truth of the whole physical universe is involved in every part of it. Could he read the needs of his own spirit and Conscience he would need no teacher. But it is only by groping, by trying this or that suggestion of reason or tradition that he finds out what he really wants, what explains and satisfies that restless discontent of his, which is nothing else than the truth within him struggling to clear consciousness. Reason can but offer him this solution or that. It is Conscience that by an act of eager recognition leaps forward at times to grasp its own, and to lift the assent of reason to the level of a Faith that can then afford to dispense with reason's suffrage. "I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I will hold Him and will not let Him go." For these reasons we must firmly deny any sort of mere relativity of religious and ethical truth. However remote and practically unattainable, there is as surely a sole right and natural development of Conscience as there is of our physiological organism; and in the quest of this perfect self-

expression Conscience is not merely passive but ceaselessly and energetically active.

This religious faculty, then, is capable of a twofold instruction, natural and supernatural, or acquired and revealed ; and, in fact, the lights from these two sources are always inextricably blended. It is only by an effort of difficult abstraction that we can conjecture what man's religious mind would be under only one or other of these guidances. Analogous to the first rude efforts at physical science there are, among the earliest types of humanity, childish strivings after some sort of religious philosophy which are simply a product of natural reason, of reflection on observation, and are in no sense spontaneous creations of the religious spirit. On the other hand, there are revelations in the true sense ; picturings of the other world given by, in, and along with religious experience, though expressed with all the crudeness of those uncultured minds from which they spontaneously spring, and to whose compeers they are addressed. At this stage, before "theology" has attained its proper abstract and conceptual form, and while it is yet largely imaginative and pictorial, it is most difficult to distinguish it from revelation to which such concreteness is normal and perpetual. There is little or nothing in their form to distinguish one of these systems of religious knowledge from the other. Yet the one is given to man without his labour ; the other is deliberately wrought out by the exercise of his reason ; the one is dependent only on moral action and disposition, the other only on mental ability.

With the development of theological abstraction comes another source of confusion of forms. For

Revelation spontaneously clothes itself in whatever language it finds to its hand; and where the mind of the prophet is already largely instructed with theological categories and conceptions, these will largely mingle with and govern the images in which his vision seeks to embody itself. Thus, without being theology, revelation may be couched in theological terms, which it uses not for their proper and theological values, but for their illustrative and symbolic values.

It seems to me that a very analogous duality of knowledge obtains in other departments of life; that prior to any deliberate explanatory efforts, certain spontaneously suggested picturings or imaginings accompany all instinctive action. The child who neither understands nor yet wants to understand himself and his world does, nevertheless, possess an imaginative synthesis of the same, formed in and by the very process of living and moving and acting. Incoherent though it be, yet as the direct fruit of experience, of which it is the very shadow, the mental reaction, it serves the purpose of practical guidance even more successfully than do subsequent self-sought explanation and theory, which only too often impede the easy spontaneity of instinct. Similarly, it may be that a great deal of the earliest mythology is not the fruit of an after-effort to understand Life and Nature as presented immediately to experience, but is the very form in which that direct experience has written itself in the imagination. In the latter case it is a knowedge *given* to man in and along with the experience of which it is a part; and so far is analogous to Revelation and not to Theology, which is a self-acquired or self-wrought knowledge.

The same point might be illustrated by the difference between the spontaneous and the philosophical statements of the phenomenon of Moral Conscience. Prior to any intention of explaining that experience, men speak of Conscience as a voice, as something locally inside them, in their breast, their heart, their brain,—something that whispers to them, and says Stop! or as the voice of God or of the Holy Spirit, or of some Guardian Angel, or *daimonion*, or of the indwelling Christ, or of their own Better Self. They deal with Conscience so pictured, obeying or disobeying it. And this dramatic symbolism possesses a most evident "working-truth," which is therefore guarantee for its possessing some kind of quite indefinable metaphysical and representative truth. It may be safely said that without this imaginative apprehension men could not deal with Conscience at all; that it is given to them in and along with the experience, and is a necessary instrument for the further control of that experience. Yet a moment's reflection tells us we are here not dealing with concepts but with images and figures; that we have something quite different from a psychological and metaphysical explanation of Conscience; that we are dealing with a passive impression, not with an active expression of truth.

If, however, Revelation belongs rather to the category of impressions than to that of expression, we should do ill to consider all religious truth of the former sort deserving of the name of Revelation. For that, it is not enough that the truth be *given* us, but it must be given in an extraordinary degree, and be of a "supernatural" kind. Else it might be most reasonably contended that

revelation were a perfectly normal and universal phenomenon; which would be to use the word in a very reasonable, but yet an unusual and misleading sense. The art-faculty exists in some degree in all men, but in its creative degree it is the privilege of a very few; and the same holds good for the gift of revelation. When we say that the truth revealed is "supernatural," we mean that it is not of a kind simply postulated as necessary for the ordinary course of spiritual and religious development. The normal and universal experiences of the moral and mystical life embody themselves in images which constitute a revelation of God and the other world distinct from the theories of religious philosophy, yet which do not merit the name of "Supernatural Revelation," of Revelation in the usual sense. But it must be maintained that *natural* Revelation is presupposed to *supernatural*, just as every faculty is presupposed to its perfect formation or transformation. No heightening or exaltation of our understanding or free mental activity, however miraculous, could make it an organ of Revelation. For, there it is *always* and *necessarily* we ourselves who speak to ourselves; who (aided no doubt by the immanent God) work out truth for ourselves. Nothing could ever come from the understanding but theology or philosophy or science or systematic thought. Revelation, on the other hand, is a transforming and heightening, not of the active, but of that receptive part of our mind which evades our free control; and which we may compare to the sense of hearing. We listen, we do not speak; we receive, we do not give; we are shown something, we do not show.

Classifying Revelation and Theology as alike forms

of religious knowledge, we are liable to fall into many fallacies by not attending carefully to their differences. For the word "knowledge" nearly always implies a representation resulting from reflection on the thing known—a predication about a subject—a judgment. The subject *as such* (though it may itself be a product of previous judgment) is there before us; it is something given. We reflect upon it, and compare it with certain possible representations of it, whose agreement with it we affirm or deny by the act of judgment. A whale might be represented by a fish. On reflection we judge it is not a fish. The subject *as such* is something presented, something impressed upon us, something of which we are aware or conscious. But till it is actively represented and expressed in the predicate we do not "know" it properly; we have not fitted it into that scheme of things which our understanding is ever elaborating, as an instrument by which we can control experience. We possess the material, but we have not yet built it into the fabric of our systematised thought. It is given to us, but we have not yet received and appropriated it.

"Knowledge," then, is used in a very different sense of experience and of reflection on experience, of presentation and of representation. It is used in an equally different sense of Revelation and of Theology. For Revelation is not so much a representation of something experienced, as one of the elements of a complex spiritual experience—an experience made up of feelings and impulses and imaginings; which reverberates in every corner of the soul and leaves its impress everywhere; in the mind no less than in the heart and will—

just as the impulse and sentiment of Conscience entail a complementary impression on the mind which is part and parcel of the same experience. It would be misleading to regard that impression as a "representation" of the impulse and feelings, and to regard these latter as the exclusive substance and reality of the experience, or as the "content" or significance of that so-called "representation." It is as much a part of the experience as they are; it is as directly "given" or "presented"; and in no wise the result of reflection upon them, or of an attempt to understand and classify them. On the contrary, it is, together with them, the subject-matter of a subsequent act of reflection which strives to understand the whole complex experience in the interests of theology or philosophy.

From this it follows that we must not regard Revelation and Theology as two sorts of "representative" knowledge dealing with the same theme or subject-matter, the one treating it poetically and imaginatively, the other conceptually and scientifically. We must not regard it as the function of the latter to translate poetry into prose; to substitute exact concepts for loose metaphors. Revelation is itself a part of that concrete "presented" reality which is the subject-matter of theological reflection; it is an element of the "experience" to be explained and digested.

The contrary supposition is accounted for by the fact that whereas the affective and volitional elements of the religious experience are evanescent, the mental or imaginative element abides in memory and survives as the representative of the total experience. I cannot repeat the whole experience at will, but I can volun-

tarily recall the impression it made on my imagination. This remembered impression very naturally arrogates to itself the name of Revelation which strictly should stand for the total original experience, and not for the memory of a part of it. Whence it comes that we easily regard this memory of its mental element as "representative" of the remaining elements. Yet this memory only "represents" the past mental impression, which impression was as much a part of the direct experience as the other elements. It did not represent those elements, but they, with it, correspond to and so far "represent" the hidden causes of the total experience. For effects are in some sense "representative" of their causes, though not by way of similitude or likeness, or as a predicate "represents" its subject.

The theologian therefore looks, or should look, upon revelation as a part of religious experience, by means of which he can, to some extent, reconstruct the whole of that experience (as an object may be reconstructed from its shadow, or an extinct species of animal from its vestiges). Viewing that total experience as an effect, he then endeavours to divine the nature of its causes and to draw certain theological and metaphysical conclusions.

Thus revelation is simply his subject-matter, the experience on which his science is founded, and which it endeavours to understand and explain. It is not a co-ordinate system of knowledge related to the same subject-matter, and treating it merely in another way (*i.e.* imaginatively rather than conceptually; less rather than more accurately).

Against the possibility of a justifiable collision be-

tween Revelation and theological or scientific thought it is usually alleged that God, who is the Author of every sort of truth, cannot contradict Himself. This is commonly understood as though God spoke the same truths, made the same statements, with two different voices, or in two different languages—supernaturally through revelation, naturally through the instrumentality of man's reason. Plainly there is something at first sight redundant and superfluous in this notion, something discordant with Divine methods of harmonious and orderly dispensation. But this impression vanishes when we recognise that Revelation is not statement but experience. "Truth" is used differently of experience and of judgment about experience; and therefore the principle in question is that which all admit, namely, that no theory is true which contradicts experience.

It is very important to remember that, strictly speaking, Revelation consists in the total religious experience and not simply in the mental element of that experience; which is to the rest as those strange images of the nature and cause of a pain are to the pain which they so often accompany and which are so unlike its rational explanation. Every doctor knows what curious imagery patients use to describe their feelings, and yet how safe and serviceable such descriptions are as a guide to diagnosis. They will speak of gnawing, cutting, stabbing sensations; of a weight on the brain or the chest; of a stitch in the side; of a lump in the throat; of a tight string round the head, and so forth. These images are rarely thought out, but are suggested and impressed upon the sufferer's imagination by the pain

itself. They are part of the experience. They are purer and more reliable as description in proportion as the sufferer is freer from any sort of medical knowledge and less capable of any disturbing reflective effort. It is no mere figure of speech to say that Christ's whole life and action, no less than His words, constituted the substance of His Revelation. He *was* the Truth, and He *lived* the Truth no less than He spoke it. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father"; not merely, "He that heard me hath heard the Father." It is a poor thin rationalism or scholasticism which supposes that words alone, unsupplemented by the gesture of life and deed and passion, could ever adequately utter an experience which is of the entire spirit and not merely of the mind. For I am not prepared to dispute with any who will deny that while God is transcendent, He is also immanent; that the spirit is as sensible of His approach or distance, of its own harmony or discord with the Divine, as the body is of its ceaseless and changing relation to the centre of the earth. I assume that all spirits and intelligences and wills belong to a system of which the Divine Spirit, the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Will is the governing and active centre drawing them all into harmony with itself; that each seeks its place and function in this spiritual organism, this "communion of Saints," this "Kingdom of God." I assume that if man is active in this process of self-adjustment to God, it is by way of response to Divine impulses; but that God is the principal Agent and Mover, and that He is to be felt, and felt directly, in every movement of the mind towards Truth, in every impulse of the Conscience towards Right, in every kindling of the heart towards Goodness.

By consequence every movement of the Spirit's life means an adjustment of the whole spirit,—mind, heart, and will,—for all play their part in every such movement. When, therefore, God reveals Himself to the spirit in an extraordinary way and degree, it is in the total experience that we are to look for the revelation and not merely in the mental element. In this total experience He is revealed, not as a fact is revealed by a statement, but as a cause is revealed in its effect. He suddenly draws near to the soul and fills her with Himself to overflowing, flooding each spiritual faculty with His own Spirit, and thereby working at times strange transformations even in the very senses and the bodily organism. Revelation is not a statement, but a "showing." God speaks by deeds, not by words. The same shock which gives fire to the heart and impulse to the will, fills the mind with some interpretative image of the agency at work—much as the sound of a footfall evokes the image of a pedestrian; or as any sound suggests an idea of its source and meaning.

The nature of the mental element of Revelation may be illustrated roughly by the immediate effect of a thunderstorm on the mind. Whether for savage or savant the external sense-impressions are approximately the same—blinding flashes, awe-inspiring peals of thunder, darkness, torrential rain, and so forth. But the impression on the imagination differs considerably according to their several mental habits. In the savage there rises at once the image of the angry storm-god; in the savant nothing is evoked but the idea of a thunderstorm. In neither case is the mental reaction the result of deliberate explanatory reflection. It is as

immediate an automatic response to the external stimuli as is that of the eye or ear. Only, whereas eye and ear are about equally developed in both, the mind is unequally developed and therefore reacts differently. But this automatic mental reaction is as much part of the experience as is the sense of light and sound; it is part of the subject-matter of subsequent reflection. The savage has heard his god thundering; the savant has witnessed a thunderstorm—not merely lightning and thunderpeals, but all that he automatically infers or co-apprehends as connected therewith. Now though one would not accept the savage's account of what had happened as possessing the slightest scientific or explanatory value, one could gather from it what had really happened just as well as from the savant's soberer and less pictorial statement. It is valuable as a record, not as an explanation, of experience. From the impression made on that simple mind we can divine what really happened; as we so often do from the accounts that children give us of what has befallen them. If they have seen an animal with a tail at each end, we know it was an elephant.

Equally abundant illustration might be drawn from the various mental images and categories in which the passion of love embodies and records itself in differently cultured minds. In all cases the non-mental element of the experience is practically the same, but the inspired mental expressions are different. From these latter one would not seek a philosophy of love, but one might take them as part and parcel of the experience, which would constitute the subject-matter of such a philosophy. Amongst the phenomena of love, almost the chief would

be the various forms of its spontaneous mental self-expression.

It is plain, then, that there is a generic difference between Revelational and Theological truth, and that they cannot be compared as two statements—poetic and scientific—of the same fact. "Prophetic" truth cannot be used, as statements can be used from which we may deduce other statements. Revelation is a showing on the part of God, a seeing on the part of the receiver. Prophecy is but the communication of this vision to others. Theology must take prophecy not as statement, but as experience; must try to understand it as a religious phenomenon, and use it as factual not as verbal evidence for its conceptual constructions of the supernatural order.

If, then, we say there is a theology implicit in Revelation, it is not as one statement is implicit in another, but as theory is implicit in experience, and as a conclusion is implied in the evidential facts that support it.

Thus certain religious experiences have filled the prophetic imagination with images of the power, majesty, and transcendence of God; others have evoked images of His tenderness, His mercy, His nearness, His Fatherhood. To St. Peter Christ is suddenly brought home with a realisation embodied in the idea of "the Messias, the Son of the living God." To the author of the Fourth Gospel He appears as the Eternal Logos. To St. Paul He is the Second or Heavenly and Spiritual Adam. In each case the mental reaction to the same shock of religious experience is somewhat different. These conceptions, as revealed, have no direct theological value; they are but part of the experience whose

character they help to determine. It is that experience, taken as concrete fact and reality, which forms the subject-matter of theological explanation. In each case the theologian will observe that Christ arrogates to Himself the highest categories with which the mind happens to be equipped for the glorification of a human being—Messias, Son of God, Archetypal Humanity, Eternal Word. To still later Christian experience He becomes co-equal, consubstantial with the Father, thanks to a current theology which finds such exaltation conceivable and consistent with His perfect manhood. But from first to last the experience dealt with, the truth revealed, is practically the same. It is because men have felt and experienced Christ to be their God, their Saviour, their Spiritual Bread, their Life, their Way, their Truth, that they have apprehended Him under these forms and images, of which some are more apt than others to satisfy the soul's need of giving utterance to its fulness.

If there is a certain contingency about the forms and images which make part of these supernatural religious experiences, it is none the less true that for the recipient they possess a divine authority as given along with the other parts of the same experience and proceeding from the same source. In this they differ from all subsequent and voluntary representations of the event. Speaking of divine illumination in general, Ignatius Loyola bids us carefully discriminate between just what was given to us and what our subsequent reflection has added, and to beware of giving to the latter the authority of the former. Plainly it is of the utmost importance, for the future practical and theological use of the experience,

that its natural self-expression should be retained pure and intact as something sacred. What Charles Lamb says of the creative artist's revelation has its place here. The prophet, like the artist, feels no liberty to tamper with or improve upon what has been shown him. He must be as true to it as the historian is to his facts. Dante did not *make* his visions; he *saw* them, and could no more see otherwise than had they been the common objects of bodily sense. "Hogarth excepted," writes Lamb, "can we produce any one painter within the last fifty years . . . that has treated a story imaginatively? By this we mean, upon whom his subject has so acted that it seemed to *direct him*—not to be arranged by him? Any upon whom its leading or collateral points have impressed themselves so tyrannically that he dare not treat it otherwise lest he should falsify a revelation?"[1]

Some sense of this tyrannical necessity of fact lies at the bottom of the sacredness with which Christianity has guarded the apostolic revelation from any sort of modification or development, and has made novelty synonymous with heresy. Instinctively the Church has felt that its truth is not the truth of theological statement, but that of fact and experience. It is the vestige, the imaginative impress which Christ made on the mentality of an age that had known and seen and touched Him; that had, through Him, been brought face to face with God, and had been filled to overflowing with the Divine Spirit. In that impression we still hold one element of that great collective religious experience. From it we can judge of the nature of the other elements, aided, moreover, by some measure of like

[1] "Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty," *Last Essays of Elia.*

experience within ourselves—much as a man in love will to some extent rightly interpret the self-utterances of some heroic and classical lover, even though his own passion falls short of that standard in strength and purity. Having the spirit of Christ in ourselves, we so far understand its classical self-utterance as given us in the apostolic revelation.

It is then a patent fallacy to speak of a "development" of revelation as though it were a body of statements or theological propositions.

We must, however, hold that revelation is a perennial phenomenon which obtains in every soul that is religiously alive and active. As the Spirit did not cease with the apostles, so neither did revelation and prophecy. But a peculiar character rightly attaches to that which was the effect of immediate contact with Christ, and of the Spirit as it was breathed forth from his very lips. This has rightly been regarded as alone classical and normative, as the test by which all spirits and revelations in the Church are to be tried. As a fountain cannot rise above its source, so neither can the waves that circle out from that central and original disturbance excel or even equal it in intensity. The revelations of later ages are to those of the apostolic age as the studies of followers to the works of a Great Master. With it they do not build up a logical system or whole; they may integrate it as different, though lesser, manifestations of the same spirit; they may resolve it as light is resolved by a prism into its multiple virtualities, but they do not complete it organically or develop it.

Whatever advance there may be, and undoubtedly is, in theological reflection and analysis, there is no advance

in revelation. That supernatural Light shone as brightly (in some ways more brightly) in the apostolic age as in any after age, even as charity burned as warmly then as ever. For the two are correlative and proportional. If we allow that the Life was lived in its fulness and purity in the earliest age, we cannot maintain that to a later was reserved the privilege of a clearer and wider illumination. Theological advance may be a gain for the understanding, but it is not directly a gain for the heart. At best it aids to the protection and preservation of Revelation in its original form and purity. Even the dogmatic decisions of the Church add nothing to, but only reassert the apostolic revelation. Their sole "faith-content" is that part of it of which they are protective. The Church but declares what the Apostles declared, and that was not theology. Dogmatic decisions are neither theological nor revelational in value, but merely protective of revelation. They no more form a dialectically developed system than do the patches and props and buttresses by which some ancient fortress has been repaired from time to time according as it has been assailed and battered from one side or another in this way or in that. The logical unity of creeds is the more or less forced result of after-arrangement. Heresies do not arise according to any logical plan of succession.

The notion of some sort of development of Revelation is possible only so long as we really confound theology and revelation. Undoubtedly these two utterly heterogeneous kinds of religious knowledge have been tangled together into one hybrid system by taking the language of revelation according to its theo-

logical values, and making it a divinely authorised basis for deduction. Theology has not taken that inspired utterance as but part of a revealing experience, which in its totality demands a philosophical explanation, and is but the subject-matter of theological reflection. It has rather treated this utterance as an inchoate theology, metaphorically and loosely expressed, which must be translated into precise terminology and then dialectically expanded. It has not recognised that the theological terms in which revelation incidentally expresses itself are not the expression of theological effort and thought, but of a massive spiritual experience; that they are used for their illustrative, not for their theological value; that their theological value is in no wise divinely authorised by such illustrative use. In consequence of this entaglement, and of the absolute inevitableness of allowing a development of theology, revelation has come to be viewed as susceptible of development also. And similarly a theological valuation of ecclesiastical dogmas, a confusion of their theological with their protective import, has introduced the hybrid and antipatristic notion of "dogmatic development." Hence a somewhat fatal consequence. For as surely as the scientific light of to-day is beyond all question a substantial advance on medieval darkness, so surely must the "developed" revelation and dogma of to-day make the Apostolic Age seem a period of primeval twilight. Where there is a true development, the end of the process is the criterion of the beginning. But nothing is more vital to Catholicism than the criterion of Apostolicity, or than the belief that Christ and his apostles realised Christianity in its greatest spiritual fulness. To

speak of that Christianity as germinal is to turn everything topsy-turvy.

No one can pretend that the Apostolic revelation was "final" in the sense that another Christ, another Incarnation, is inherently unthinkable. Nor in the sense of excluding any further revelation in or outside the Church. It is "final" in the sense that it alone is normative and authoritative for Christianity, and is the fullest manifestation of that Spirit by which all subsidiary revelations are to be tested; and in the sense that it does not admit of development as theology does. Indeed, we might as well speak of a development of Christ.

From its very nature Revelation admits of development as little as does poetry or art, and for much the same reason. For in man it is, after all, only the mind and the intellect that develop in any appreciable sense by the steady accumulation of experience and information and by the continual effort to understand and systematise that experience for the guidance of life, thought, speech and action. But the great driving-forces of life—the passions, affections, emotions—are as constant as the structure of man's bodily frame and as his organs of sensation or locomotion—constant at least in the variety and irregularity of their distribution. Here we find no sort of systematic progress and development. Faith, Hope, Desire, Fear, Love—human and divine—these are to be found sporadically in their highest intensity at any time in history, at any stage of mental development. It is not in these driving-forces, but in the direction which the mind gives to them, that we are to look for development. There is no

progress in goodness, *i.e.* in the *love* of what is right; but only in ethics, *i.e.* in the *understanding* of what is right. There is no progress in religion, *i.e.* in the spirit of Faith, Hope and Charity; but only in theology, *i.e.* in the *understanding* of things divine. Can it be maintained that for all our clearer understanding, religious feeling has ever risen higher than in some of the Psalms or in Deutero-Isaiah? or that for all the ethical refinement that separates us from savagery and barbarism, there has been a proportional advance on the moral heroism of the past? Has poetry developed since Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare? Has passion grown in depth and purity with the succession of centuries? All we can say is that the mysticism, the heroism, the inspiration of those creative spirits would have found in our time a fuller, more flexible, more intelligent medium of self-expression; that the forces would have been more skilfully, less wastefully, directed. Revelation stands in this respect on the same level as those great creations of art and poetry which are but the natural self-expression of that passionate experience which they embody imaginatively—as natural as a cry, or a sob, or a groan, which signify but do not state; whose truth is not that of statement. Such creations would be of no greater artistic truth had they been embodied in the terms and images of a more delicate and highly developed culture. Nay, the ruder and less pliant the medium, the stronger and greater does the inspiration seem which could mould it like wax to its purpose. Revelation, the natural self-expression of a divine afflatus, is as the record of itself made by a passing hurricane in the wrack and ruin which it leaves

in its wake. The nature of that record varies according to what lies in the track of the tempest; but whether it be written in the heaped and furrowed sands of the desert, or in the uprooted trunks, torn limbs and scattered foliage of the forest, or in the bared roof-trees, levelled walls and fallen towers of the wind-swept city, its lesson is equally legible as a revelation of the strength and direction of a mighty spirit that has passed by. Had Christ come in another age to another people, the Gospel, written in different words and deeds, had been still the same Gospel, the record of the same Power and Spirit, albeit in conflict with another class of oppositions and obstructions.

Hence, though it is preposterous for a science and, therefore, for Theology to be under the bondage of the past, and to look to its first crude essays as normative and canonical, there is no such unreasonableness in requiring art or literature to look to the great creations of former times for their inspiration and guidance; and for the same reason there is no obscurantism in holding that a revelation two thousand years old may be a standard and test for all future time. When it is a question of Christian theology or ecclesiastical institutions, which are the work of human reflection and ingenuity, the appeal to the criterion of primitive times is treason against the laws of progress. Not so when it is a question of the Christian spirit and of the Revelation in which it is embodied; for these lie outside the realm of progress and admit of no quasi-organic development.

But although Apostolic revelation is in no sense the beginning or first chapter of Christian theology, yet it is in some sense the criterion both of theology and of all

those institutional means which the Church has taken for the preservation of the spirit and truth of the Gospel. The end is always the criterion of the means and instruments devised for its attainment. Also it is plain that while any science must be absolutely free in the application of its methods, it is as absolutely limited by the nature and character of its subject-matter. Theology may have no right to argue from revealed utterance regarded as theological statement, but it has every right and is bound to argue from it regarded as spiritual phenomenon.

In the hagiography, in the mystical and ascetical writers of the Church, we have a vast store of materials for a scientific religious psychology, which is as yet only in its infancy. The form in which it is perpetuated for us is utterly unscientific. We have a tangle of contradictory maxims and apothegms—contradictory only because the same facts have clothed themselves in irreconcilably different figures and metaphors in different minds—have evoked different reactions. To accept these artless utterances as reflex statements, to try to reconcile them, to argue a system from them, is to forget that their whole evidential value is that of natural effects. The psychologist has to ask himself first, What were the experiences that presented themselves in this guise to unscientific simple minds? and then, What do these experiences signify for science? Similarly, the theologian should ask, What are the experiences expressed in revealed utterances, and what do those experiences signify for theology?

Were it merely a question of translating metaphorical into exact language, the result would be to void theology

of all but relative value. For when a truth is known only through a metaphor, when we have no means of comparing the metaphor with the reality or of defining the limits of likeness and unlikeness, every attempt to get at the hinted truth is mere guesswork. Viewed, however, as spiritual phenomenon, revelation, however difficult to explain, does admit of theological explanation. Theology, like every other science, is in quest of a truth involved in facts, a truth that is one and one only. As the guardian of all religious interests, the Church is also the natural guardian of theology—of the religious interests of the intellect. And this all the more because, owing to the common confusion of theology with revelation, the statements of the former may easily seem hostile to the supposed "statements" of the latter. Here her protective instinct rouses her to hurl defiance at even the most cogent theological reasoning as long as it seems to endanger the supernatural truth of revelation. Still, her guardianship of theology is of a wholly different character to that which she exercises over revelation, and is dependent on and conditioned by it. She has no gift of scientific or theological inerrancy. She is inerrant, as instinct is inerrant, in her sense and affirmation of what is revealed and of what imperils revelation, but by no means in her theological assertions regarded as theological. She knows and feels the impression they make, it is this impression which she approves or disapproves. What is perfectly true may create a false impression; what is perfectly false may create a true impression. Relatively to a certain mentality the greater truth may be the greater lie. The denial of geocentricism may for a certain age

mean the denial of religion. In this way she has interfered, and will always interfere, with theological liberty; just as she interferes with external and profane interests for like motives. In both cases she may err, and has erred in theology, in science, in practical prudence, but not in her instinct of self-preservation. She has been at once right and wrong—right in her own department, wrong in her neighbours'. To expect anything else would be to expect a dispensation of continual miracles. All interests in life elbow and jostle one another in a struggle that makes for an ideal of harmony ever approached, never attained. In the long run injustices and violences are requited, and those who sin eventually suffer — be the sinner Church or State, Theology or Science.

It is naturally to doctors as a class that we look for the development of medical science, though there is no monopoly that would exclude others from the same pursuit; and similarly it is mainly, but by no means exclusively, to the clergy that we look for the development of theology, *i.e.* of the science of their profession. But we cannot regard this as part of the Church's divine mission, which is simply prophetic and practical. The Apostles were sent not to teach theology, but to preach the Gospel. It were, however, a monstrous inference to conclude that the Church should sit by indifferent as to whether her children were taught pantheism or deism or atheism. The love and defence of natural truth is a duty incumbent on the Church as on any Christian man; and, therefore, merely in the name of Reason and apart from any claim to divine inerrancy, she must go forth against false philosophy

with the weapons of reason. But over and above this, such errors may be contradicted by what is implied in revelation considered strictly as a spiritual phenomenon. They may contradict religious experience. This contradiction she may either prove fallibly by theological reflection, or *feel* by an infallible instinct, which will justify a certain blind opposition to such false tenets. As we have said already, Conscience is not merely formal and negative in its indication; it is also positive and constructive. Truth is one and one only, whether it come to us through natural or supernatural experience; whether through reflection on the uniformities and regularities of the world and man, or through reflection on the events of the spiritual life, the free creative action of God in man and through man. However various the imagery and language in which revelation utters itself in different ages and cultures, the underlying reality which reveals itself, now more or less purely and unimpededly, is ever necessarily the same, even as human love is ever the same phenomenon, however various the words and deeds in which it spontaneously finds utterance. The differences are analogous to those of the reactions of the same chemical element in various combinations, all of which alike reveal its nature and unfold its endless potentialities. God is one, and the spirit of man is one; and there is, therefore, but one legitimate course for the development of conscience; one, and one only, truth that explains and satisfies its restlessness and reveals it to itself.

From this we can understand how various revelations may be related to one another as perfect or less perfect betrayals of the same supernatural reality, of the nature

of God and man, of their relations to one another, of the ultimate meaning and end of the world and of human history.

If we speak of their truth as "prophetic truth," it is to indicate that they show us the world and history *sub specie æternitatis;* that as the poet or dramatist manipulates history and philosophy in the interests of a higher ideal, that finds but an imperfect expression in the actual; or as the artist corrects "the trembling hand of Nature" and gives forth in its purity the thought she stumbles over; so the prophet sees and expresses the religious meaning of the world and life; reaches back to the Alpha and forward to the Omega, and gives us a "statical" and foreshortened presentment of the whole process, making Past and Future meet in the Present; letting the latent and struggling ideal shine like its *aura* through the actual and earthly reality. His work is a work of interpretation; of getting at the more inward and deeper truth through the husk of the phenomenal and relative. His reading of past history is as little historical as his reading of future history; whether he looks back to the creation or forward to the Messianic consummation, in both cases he sees fact indeed, but fact transfigured and rearranged so as to bring out the underlying meaning of the whole process. And the like is to be said of the prophet's philosophy or science.

The governing end of prophecy is the practical interests of the religious life; to provide a direction and a stimulus; to give a construction of the other world and of this world in relation to the other.

If, then, to deny all historical or philosophical content

to prophetic vision is to misapprehend its character as a supernatural interpretation or view of the world and history; yet to regard it as historical or philosophical statement, and to use such supposed statements as the basis of argument, is equally to confound together things so generically different as experience and reflection on experience.

It is precisely the theologian's task to discern as best he may what historical and philosophical truths are implied in such prophetic visions, viewed not as statement, but as psychological experience—whether it be that of an individual prophet or that of an inspired community like the apostolic body. But such deductions and analyses can never have more than the authority of reason; they are drawn from, but are no part of, that supernatural experience which we call Revelation—which is a vision or showing, but not a statement.

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It is not possible to do more than touch upon the notion of Revelation, considered not as an experience, but as the record and expression of an experience capable of being communicated to others. The end of all such communication must be in some measure to evoke the same spiritual phenomenon in others, to bring them to a like relation to the Eternal. This needs a certain translation of inward vision into outward language and symbolism—a translation that can never be exhaustive or adequate, but at most suggestive. Under the influence of a strong and personal afflatus, while the seer is still actually dominated and absorbed by his vision, such utterance is spontaneous and inspired, and

may be considered a continuous part or prolongation of the total experience called revelation. On the other hand, it may be the result of quiet after-thought, of reflection on remembered experience, and so far, however adequate or truthful, it is not inspired. More commonly we should expect a mixed product; reflection and voluntary adaptation intervening in a moment of inspiration, and inspiration supervening on after-thought and remembrance. "And as I mused, the fire kindled."

On the ears of the hearer prophetic utterance must fall dead, unless there be within him a capacity to be evoked and directed by the Divine Word, a spirit to answer the Spirit. In default of such, the word may present concepts to the understanding and pictures to the imagination, but no real spiritual content. It will, if anything, rather puzzle, perplex, and annoy, than illuminate and kindle; for it will be estimated as theology or history, and not as true religious revelation—as statement and not as experience. To recur to what is plainly the aptest illustration, it will be as the great poetic and dramatic self-utterances of love to one who has never been stirred by passion, who lacks all experience of the spiritual force that so utters itself. Divine Love, the love of God, and of man in relation to God, is the very sum and substance of religious experience. It is the phenomenon that explains itself spontaneously in Revelation, and which it is the prophet's aim to reproduce in others through the communication of the Divine Word. His work, then, is a social work, analogous to that of the teacher. Thanks to the teaching and tradition of the society into which we are born, we can appropriate the gathered results of the experience and

reflection of others, and start, not from nothingness, but with a vast capital at our disposal. Left to ourselves (were such destitution conceivable) we could not hope to get further than the most savage rudiments of culture. And the like holds of our mystical or spiritual capacities, which would be all but dormant were they not roused and stimulated and directed by the communicated experience of others; were we left simply to those ordinary revelations given to all, and which, even then, are so largely influenced by the mental formation which we have received.

Plainly then, the great majority depend for the fulness of their spiritual life on the assimilation of the Divine Word communicated to them from outside.

This assimilation is precisely an act of inward recognition—a response of spirit to spirit, and not only the mental apprehension and acceptance of statements and meanings. This latter is but the assent to the word of man falling on the ear; not to the word of God spoken in the heart and conscience. Conscience must first appropriate the word, recognise it as its own, as the explanation of itself, and so impose it, as it imposes all its behests, imperiously and absolutely. In other words, the teaching from outside must evoke a revelation in ourselves; the experience of the prophet must become experience for us. It is to this evoked revelation that we answer by the act of Faith, recognising it as God's word in us and to us. Were it not already written in the depths of our being, where the spirit is rooted in God, we could not recognise it.

Nor is this to confound Faith and Charity, for one may receive and yet be disobedient to the Heavenly

Vision; "the man whose eyes God hath opened" may fight against the Truth, may kick against the goad.

Without personal revelation, then, there can be no faith, nothing more than theological or historical assent. Revelation cannot be put into us from outside; it can be occasioned, but it cannot be caused, by instruction. Paul may sow, and Apollos may water, but God alone can give the increase (cf. *à Kempis*, Bk. III, c. 2, "They can utter words, but they give not the spirit; they deliver the letter, but Thou openest the sense," etc.).

This is what underlies the common teaching of even the scholastic "intellectualists," when they affirm that, after apologetic has done all it can do by way of instruction and proof, it needs a supernatural illumination of the mind and a supernatural inclination of the will to change intellectual assent into divine faith. God from within the soul must echo the prophet's message and make it his own. He must touch the inward ear with an "Ephphatha!" This is what Browning describes in "Paracelsus":—

> *Time flies; youth fades; life is an empty dream,*
> 'Tis the mere echo of time; and he whose heart
> Beat first beneath a human breast; whose speech
> Was copied from a human tongue, can never
> Recall when he was living and knew not this.
> Nevertheless, long seasons come and go,
> Till some one hour's experience shows what nought,
> He deemed, could clearer show; and ever after
> An altered brow, and eye, and gait, and speed
> Attest that now he knows the adage true:
> *Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.*

Yet few of us are fated to have prophets for our immediate guides who, filled with the vision of the

truth they utter, could cast and recast its expression to suit our tardy apprehension; whose inward fire, moreover, could impart a quickening power to their words, which must ever be wanting to the written letter or even to the cold repetition of inspired utterance by uninspired lips. For the most part we are left to the guidance of a traditional revelation, *i.e.* of a revelation contained or embedded in the traditional religious teaching of the society to which we belong.

Such a tradition we find in the sacred books of the Old and New Testament, and in the authentic teachings of the Christian Church. Here, mingled inextricably, as gold in the ore, with much that is merely theological and ethical reflection, and much that is mere history and sacred legend, we have that revelation of Himself which God has given at sundry times and in divers manners to the prophets, and last of all through His Son Jesus Christ and his chosen apostles. We have, so to say, the utterance of a collective and continuous experience of the human spirit in varying degrees and modes of contact with the Divine. It is ever one and the same truth, one and the same Love, that strives to break into full consciousness, and find a sufficing self-utterance, which it finds at last in Him who was pre-eminently the Word of God.

It is, then, in this great religious tradition that the soul finds the normal and necessary instrument of her awakening, formation, and guidance. Yet to take it as such it must be given her from within. She must see it mirrored in the depths of her own being.

CHAPTER XII

"THEOLOGISM"—A REPLY

ALTHOUGH it involves a good deal of repetition of what has already been said, I can hardly do better than conclude this sequence of essays with a reply to what purports to be a general criticism of my whole theological attitude, by the R. P. Lebreton, S.J. That criticism appeared in the *Revue Pratique d'Apologétique*, February, 1907. Its substance can be easily gathered from the following pages. In the foregoing chapter I have tried to give some precision to what I mean by Revelation as distinct from Theology. Here I try to make a somewhat similar distinction between the dogmatic and the theological values of those doctrinal decisions of œcumenical authority which are avowedly not additions to, but reassertions of Revelation, and whose principal and solely obligatory truth is the truth which they implicitly reassert and protect. As explicit theological statements they bind the intellect, like other scientific conclusions, so far as they are correctly demonstrated. Of this distinction I can only say, *Capiat qui capere potest*—Let him take it who can; and that I could wish there were a straighter way out of a labyrinth of difficulties. It is, at least, founded on the admissions of theologians, and they will do well to

secure a better fire-escape before they discard this one.

One possible inference I wish to repudiate; namely, that one may tell lies to protect the truth. This is done every day, and has been done from the beginning by those whom Coleridge rather savagely calls "orthodox liars for God"; by men who in their infidel heart of hearts do not believe that their faith will bear criticism and investigation; who stretch out a lying hand to steady the tottering ark of truth. From the first day when the Gospels began to be corrected in the interests of "edification," up to the present, a growing debt to truth has been thus accumulated and passed on from generation to generation, each less able than the preceding to clear up its tangled accounts.

And it is just upon us that the burden falls in these days when truth will be denied no longer. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Because they continually purchased edification at the cost of truth, we have to buy back truth at the cost of infinite scandal.

A lie has never protected truth in any permanent and ultimate sense. But for the finite mind truth and error are tangled as the roots of tares and wheat. Strive how we will to be truthful, to grasp things as they are, to utter them sincerely as they seem to us, we shall never get the gold without the alloy. So closely do they interpenetrate and cling together that, for a given mentality, it is often psychologically impossible to convey a truth without conveying an error; to uproot an error without uprooting a truth. One may even foresee and have to permit the error for sake of the truth, trust-

ing that time will bring the correction. But this is very different from deliberately teaching error for truth's sake. All I maintain in this essay is, that for a certain time, and for a certain mentality and culture, the reassertion of revealed truth may necessarily and inculpably involve the assertion of what for other times is a theological or philosophical or scientific or historical error. The assertion and the reassertion being netted together, I would submit that it is to the latter, and not to the former, that we owe the homage of faith; that the latter is the substance, the irreformable element of dogma.

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It is comparatively rare, in my narrow experience, to find a theological critic like R. P. Lebreton, who, while differing from me profoundly, not only abstains from every sort of personality and sinister innuendo, but also endeavours to present my views in the fairest and most favourable light. It is no qualification of this praise to insist that in one or two instances he has not read me carefully, and has made me say what I did not say; and that his general interpretation of all that I do say is one which I must repudiate. A certain percentage of inaccuracy is to be looked for in all quotation; and it is hopeless to interpret one system by the categories of another. If this latter principle seems to make it hopeless for myself to do justice to M. Lebreton, I must remark that, whereas I have belonged to, and passed out of, his school, I have no reason to think that he has belonged to, and passed out of, mine. Whence I may, without arrogance, claim to know and understand all that is to be said for his position; to be fully alive to its

strength and its weakness. Formerly a thomist and scholastic, as he probably knows, *supra coætaneos meos*, it was not for nothing that I left a system so alluring in its simplicity, directness, and universality, for one of whose tentative and imperfect character I am only too fully aware. Nor shall I be otherwise than cordially grateful if M. L. can persuade me that the easier and simpler way is also the safer and truer. Neither I nor my system claim to be infallible.

The main theme of my observations is contained in the two concluding paragraphs of M. L.'s critique, which run as follows :—

(1) "Cette analyse du dogme nous fait assez comprendre ce que M. Tyrrell entend par la théologie : c'est toute représentation intellectuelle de la vérité dogmatique, quelles que soient d'ailleurs son origine et ses garanties ; les définitions des papes et des conciles, les symboles de foi reçus par l'Eglise œcuménique ne peuvent, pas plus que les conclusions des théologiens, prétendre à une vérité infaillible et s'imposer à la conscience chrétienne. Si, dans le symbole de saint Athanase, ces mots 'ceci est la foi catholique, et quiconque n'y croit pas ne peut être sauvé' se rapportaient, comme ils le paraissent, à l'analyse théologique qui les précéde, ils seraient ridicules. Leur seul sens tolérable est : Ceci est l'analyse de la foi catholique, des faits et des vérités dont on doit vivre (ou du monde surnaturel dans lequel on doit vivre) si l'on veut être sauvé."

(2) "Il est superflu, je crois, de discuter longuement cette théorie ; sa signification est assez évidente, et tout catholique sait ce qu'il doit en penser. La foi n'est pas pour nous le sens ou le goût de Dieu ; c'est l'adhésion

libre de notre esprit à une vérité révélée par Dieu. Nous savons que l'objet de la foi est hors de notre portée, que nous ne pouvons l'atteindre immédiatement et en lui-même, mais seulement dans la révélation qui nous le présente. Le motif suprême de notre foi ne sera donc point une expérience personnelle, que l'enseignement extérieur ne ferait que provoquer; ce sera l'autorité divine, dont nous aurons reconnu le caractère dans la révélation chrétienne, et qui s'impose à notre assentiment comme un témoignage irrefragable. L'objet de notre foi ne sera point ces forces incertaines et vagues que le sentiment religieux peut entrevoir et postuler, ce seront tous les dogmes que Dieu nous aura révélés. Respectueux de tout le magistère de l'Eglise, nous adhérerons aux propositions qu'il formule dans la mesure où il le demande et dans le sens qu'il leur donne; et sachant que cette soumission est obligatoire pour toute conscience humaine, et que seule l'ignorance invincible en peut excuser, nous réciterons sans hésitation le symbole de saint Athanase, et nous n'aurons pas besoin d'en forcer l'interprétation pour lui prêter un sens 'tolérable.'"

Of these two paragraphs, the first purports to put my position in a nutshell; the second, to set forth the Catholic position as something quite opposite.

I propose, therefore, to show, first, that I can and do accept every proposition of this second paragraph as cordially as M. L., though probably, or even certainly, not in M. L.'s sense. Then, I will show that the first paragraph, owing to M. L.'s scholastic prepossessions, is a pure travesty of my position. Incidentally, I trust that I shall be able to state that position in terms

adapted to such prepossessions, and to make it clear why I cannot accept what I presume to be M. L.'s interpretation of the second paragraph.

"La foi n'est pas pour nous le sens ou le goût de Dieu; c'est l'adhésion libre de notre esprit à une vérité révélée par Dieu." What is denied here I have always denied, and what is asserted I have always asserted. I have filled many pages of *Lex Credendi*, not to speak of earlier writings, with a repudiation of the fallacy of *Sentimentalism;* and though to exclude altogether the element of feeling from the act of faith would be to fall into a similar fallacy (whether "intellectualism" or "voluntarism"), yet to make faith consist in an undirected, objectless, unilluminated feeling would be a shallowness that I should be sorry to attribute to any serious thinker. How alien such "fideism" is from my whole system of thought may be seen in my two articles on "Mysteries a Necessity of Life" (chapter vi), and indeed from the most superficial acquaintance with my writings in general. Is M. L. quite sure as to what he means by "fideism?"

If, however, by "le *sens* de Dieu" M. L. intends to repudiate my words which he quotes (p. 547): "La foi est une vue de Dieu," let him notice that I add "non face en face, mais dans un miroir," and that I am using the language of S. Paul (1 Cor. XIII). If I have dwelt (as against scholastic intellectualism and rationalism) more frequently on the affective and voluntary elements of the act of faith, I have both explicitly and implicitly always recognised its cognitive character as involving a presentment of divine realities. My psychology forbids me to conceive any spiritual act whose real and in-

divisible simplicity may not be logically analysed into knowledge, feeling, and will, or which does not imply an apprehended truth as well as a desired end and a practical determination. Most cordially, then, do I endorse the statement that faith is "l'adhésion de notre esprit à une vérité." Equally do I assert that this truth, unlike that of *Natural Theology*, is not given us by "flesh and blood"—by our own reasonings or the reasonings of others—but by the "Father who is in heaven": "car, cette vue ne dépend pas de nous, mais nous est donnée" (p. 547).

I can hardly suppose that M. L. contends that this "gift" must come to us from a *local* or *spatial* "outside," that this message must arrive through the external senses. I presume that the first recipients of a divine revelation are capable of "faith" in the fullest sense, although they may have acquired the truth, "sine predicante," by an inward vision. Indeed, Revelation must be ultimately of *things*, not of words or symbols of things. It is some communicated experience of God's presence or providence or fatherhood, of Christ's saving and atoning power over the soul, of communion with the Saints, of the forgiveness of sins, of the hope of immortality, which fills and inspires the spirit of the prophet, and spontaneously utters and expresses itself through the categories and images with which his mind happens to be instructed. To conceive revelation as necessarily trumpeted from the clouds is surely to be led astray by the naïve symbolism of Christian art. It is indifferent to the essential idea of revelation whether the Divine Spirit causes the revealed truth to spring up in our own minds, or throws a supernatural

and revealing light from within on a truth presented to us from without. In both cases the revelation is from within, is individual and incommunicable. If this be "fideism," then all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church are "fideists," and I am at a loss how to classify M. L. otherwise than as an "intellectualist." I take it as indisputable that a man may assent intellectually to the whole apologetic and theological doctrine of the Church and yet, for lack of such inward revelation, have no more faith than a dog. As to the *object* of Faith, the Divine and hidden Reality of which revelation gives us a symbolic presentment, I am sure that M. L. has no intention of putting himself in opposition to Catholic tradition as represented by S. Paul and S. Augustine, and S. Teresa and S. John of the Cross, and the universal consensus of all mystics (and indeed of all devout souls), by denying that God makes Himself directly and immediately felt through His effects and workings in the religious experience of every one as a "Power which makes for Righteousness." I am told that my reviewer in the *Bulletin de Lit. Ecclésiastique* (February, 1906) repudiates for himself any such inward experience of God; but rather than admit such abnormality I prefer to think that his introspective self-analysis is at fault. What God is "in Himself" and for His own divine experience is "*hors de notre portée.*" Any further knowledge of God is given to us in the mirror of reason or in that of revelation. In no case is it *face to face* knowledge, but *per speculum, in ænigmate.*

When M. L. speaks of our adhesion to revealed truth as a *free* adhesion, I am sure he is not referring merely

to the non-coerciveness of the apologetic reasons in favour of the Creed, as though their scientific imperfection were a condition of faith, or as though there would be no room for faith were the demonstration perfect. Here, I believe, his school has wisely departed from the doctrine of S. Thomas, that there cannot be faith and science about the same matter. I am sure he means, as I do, that revelation, *as such*, comes to us, not as a theological argument, perfect or imperfect, but as the Word of God *in* the soul and *to* the soul; not from flesh and blood, but from the Father; that its cogency is in no sense the cogency of the laws of thought; that its freedom is in no sense the freedom of an assent to probable reasoning, but that of the answer of the soul to the voice of its Maker. M. L. knows the theology of his own school too well to be guilty of so crude an "intellectualism" as the denial of all this would involve. He knows that without a *pius credulitatis affectus* and a supernatural *illuminatio* (which must manifestly be some sort of revelation) no argumentation can elicit more than mere intellectual assent. It is precisely and only in virtue of this "illuminatio" that I can "recognise the divine authority of the Christian Revelation," and that it becomes a personal revelation from God to myself; an interior word of God in me addressed to my own Conscience. Seeing that both the "illuminatio" and the "pius affectus" are personal and incommunicable experiences, it is plain that M. L. does not deny that the recognition of the divine authority of Christianity cannot be forced upon me by any argument, but is a personal and direct experience given to the soul by God, occasioned, but not caused, by external instruction.

External instruction can give me "reasons" for holding the Gospel to be the revealed word of God; it cannot throw upon it that supernatural light which God alone can kindle in my soul. It can elicit theological assent. It cannot elicit Faith. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in Heaven." He can therefore only mean that the "supreme motive of our faith" is not that "illuminatio" viewed as a mere psychological event, but its divine authority as a "locutio Dei," whereby God adopts as His own word what else (as a mere theological tradition) were but the word of man—of flesh and blood. If he meant more than this, I should be inclined to recommend him a closer study of approved manuals.

When he goes on to say: "L'objet de notre foi ne sera point ces forces incertaines et vagues que le sentiment religieux peut entrevoir et postuler," he alludes, I presume, to that "puissance qui tend vers la justice" made known to every soul in those elementary and natural experiences of the moral Conscience which it is the function of revelation to explain and develop. Now, that vaguely apprehended *Puissance* is God. To make that vague apprehension more distinct is the work of Revelation—to perfect supernaturally that religious faculty in man which else admits only of a lower order and lesser degree of perfection through the use of reason and observation. Deny this natural religious faculty, these vague apprehensions of God, and man would be as little receptive of revelation, as little capable of faith as a reasonless brute would be of scientific instruction. I am sure therefore that M. L. does not mean to deny that God is, as all theologians agree, the central "material

object" of our faith; that He is the principal theme of revelation; that He is the hidden Sun whose light shines upon us dimly through the mists and enigmas of revelation. What M. L. means is what I mean; that the direct object of faith is revelation—the enigmatic presentment of Himself which God reveals to us in the teachings of Christianity.

I will not for one moment allow that M. L. excels me in respect for the magisterium of the Church, or in his adhesion to the propositions which it formulates "dans la mesure qu'il demande et dans le sens qu'il leur donne." But he must allow—nay, he insists—that the "foi de charbonnier" is not sufficient for a theologian, and that there is much latitude of opinion, first, as to what propositions can claim the authority of the magisterium; secondly, as to the exact sense which it gives to them; thirdly, as to the measure of assent it claims for them. For this reason I have no hesitation whatever in reciting the Athanasian Creed, though I deny that the easy and superficial interpretation of such deep theological utterances is at all likely to be the true one.

I have therefore shown that I can and do accept every proposition of this second paragraph as cordially as M. L. does. To say that I accept them in M. L.'s sense I should have first to know to which, if any, of the conflicting scholastic "faith-theories"—S. Thomas's, Suarez's, De Lugo's, Franzelin's, etc.—he gives his adhesion. For nowhere is scholasticism, with its coarse psychology of sharply divided "faculties," more helpless than in striving to escape the inevitable vicious circle resulting from the endeavour to treat the act of faith as the conclusion of an argument, and yet to give it a force im-

measurably greater than its premisses—to treat it as an intellectual process, and yet to exempt it from intellectual laws. The mere existence of such irreconcilable schools proves that for Catholics the question as to the nature and analysis of the act of faith is a perfectly open one. When the Scholastics shall have agreed among themselves, we non-scholastics will give all due consideration to so significant an agreement. Meanwhile, we keep our liberty.

I must now show that the first of the two paragraphs which I am criticising is, owing to M. L.'s scholastic prepossessions, a pure travesty of my position.

His words convey, and are plainly intended to convey, to the reader that I have no more respect for the œcumenical definitions of the Church than for the unauthorised conclusions of theology—in a word, that I am not a Catholic at all. Nor does he hesitate (on p. 550) to speak of "ces doctrines fidéistes"—thus defining the heresy which should exclude me from the Church. And he confirms all this by what I say about the preamble of the Athanasian Creed.

Though I am not a "fideist" I do not wish to repel the reproach with violence, any more than Christ repelled the reproach of being a Samaritan. There are good Samaritans and good "fideists." There is no "ism," not even scholasticism, that does not stand for some partial, but too much neglected, aspect of truth. To conquer a heresy we must not only understand it, but sympathise with it; and it is through the lack of such sympathetic understanding on the part of Churchmen that heresies rise, live and prosper. Much then as I sympathise with fideism against scholasticism, I also

sympathise with scholasticism against fideism; though I share neither heresy, but am a Catholic *sine addito*—neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, nor of Cephas. For although in its idolatry of the *raison raisonnante*, in its contempt of the mystical and sub-conscious side of man's spiritual nature, in its saturation with the pantheistic tendencies of its Arabian progenitors, scholasticism has given birth to the earlier Protestantism, to Socinianism, to Spinozism, to the Deism and Rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is equally evident that fideism runs off into vague "mysticality" for lack of the bridle of systematic reasoning; and that both alike sin by an inadequate and abstract conception of the sources of human knowledge and certainty.

Precisely, then, because he is a scholastic, because he regards the "depositum fidei" as a miraculously communicated body of theological statements, committed to the Church's care, to be developed by theological methods, M. Lebreton necessarily supposes that the Church is primarily the guardian of a theology; that the sole or principal value of her definitions is a theological and scientific value, and that therefore to deny their theological and scientific values would be to deny them all value whatsoever.

It is plainly in the interests of truth that I should say openly, and without hedging, what I think in this matter; that I should give M. Lebreton every possible chance of convicting me of error. For many years previous to my essay on the *Relation of Theology to Devotion*,[1] I held his thesis and did my best to defend it, till its utter inadequacy forced me into my present

[1] Chapter iii.

very tentative position. In an article entitled "Semper Eadem,"[1] I endeavoured to delineate the desperate consequences that must result from the supposition that the use of certain philosophical and scientific categories for the expression of divine realities (whether in revelation or in the dogmatic pronouncements of the Church) lent a divine authority to the systems from which those categories were borrowed. I pointed out that it would imply a revelation of natural philosophy and of science concurrent with a revelation of supernatural truth. It would follow that, under pain of sin against faith, Catholic philosophers and scientists would be bound to work within the limits of those categories; and that since the liberty to criticise and reconstitute categories is the *sine qua non* of scientific progress, they would necessarily be confined to the mere explication and application of principles involved in their faith. This seemed to me to make Science not the handmaid, but the slave of revealed truth. I asked: "Does the deposit of faith, and do the infallible definitions of the Church bind us absolutely to the categories and thought-forms of the age in which they were formulated?" I am still waiting for a plain answer to this plain question, and I trust M. L. will enlighten me. The consequences of either "Yes" or "No" are sufficiently momentous to merit a reply. Those of the affirmative answer (which I need not develop here and can be found in the said article) seemed to me so fatal to religion that I was driven to consider those of the negative. But here, too, it seemed plain that what I described as "liberal theology," *i.e.* a theology unfettered by deference to the formulations of the Past, was in-

[1] Chapter iv.

compatible with the traditional reverence given to the utterances of Revelation and of œcumenical councils.

The synthesis already implied in my article on the "Relation of Theology to Devotion," and developed in "The Rights and Limits of Theology,"[1] seemed to lie in distinguishing between the prophetic, oracular, or supernatural value of such utterances, and their philosophic, scientific, and natural values; and in regarding these latter as but ministerial to the former, as the mere vehicle or medium of expression, as winning a certain consecration from their use, yet as in no wise limiting the freedom of mental development.

On closer examination it became clear to me that such a view, far from being a "modernism," was simply a reaction towards the teaching of the Fathers, and a renunciation of that theory of development which treats revelation not as the mere subject-matter of theological reflection, but as itself a theology; which makes it an inherent and fundamental part of the theological Whole. Development of this sort would place the Church of earlier ages at a great spiritual disadvantage, and would stultify the appeal of the Fathers to the criterion of actual (not merely of virtual) apostolicity of tradition. If the first ages possessed but the germs and rudiments of Christian truth, and we possess the organism in a highly developed stage, it is an equivocation to say that there has been no increase of revelation. Every filling-in and determination of vague principles and outlines is an increase of knowledge in whatever order of knowledge it be. A schoolboy who has mastered the first book of Euclid knows more than when he knew

[1] Chapter viii.

only the definitions and axioms from which it is developed. Not only for the Fathers but for S. Thomas, and for all theologians till comparatively recent times, the "sameness" of the faith in all ages was a literal sameness and not that of a growing organism. For them, the function of the Church's magisterium was not to add to, but to protect and to keep unchanged the revelation committed to her care—a work which demanded divine assistance and a special providence, but in no wise a new inspiration or a further revelation.

The above distinction between revelation and theology; between prophetic truth and the scientific formulation of prophetic truth; between the illustrative meaning and the proper meaning of philosophical and scientific propositions or terms,[1] seemed at once to bring me into line with the older Catholic instincts, and to offer a readier solution of those difficulties which the modern insistence on Development is vainly designed to meet.

I recognise then two fountains of religious truth—natural and supernatural, reason and revelation, and two corresponding styles of utterance—the one scientifically exact, the other prophetic and inspired; the one under the control of man's will and calculation, the other given to him, or forced from him, by the Spirit *qui locutus est per prophetas.* To bring these two generically different orders of truth and utterance into one system by a sort of "confusion of natures," by using prophetic utterances as theological premisses, by

[1] A proposition of astronomy may be asserted in the interests of astronomy, or simply to protect or illustrate a truth in some other order, in which latter case the said truth is its "dominant" meaning.

giving supernatural authority to scientific terms and propositions (*qua* scientific), is to lose oneself in a labyrinth of insoluble difficulties. It is equally vain to deny the close dependence of these two systems—theology and revelation—which conspire to one and the same end of religious truth and stand in the relation of scientific reflection and the subject-matter of that reflection; which therefore, retaining their distinctness, help one another each in its own order. The nature of this dependence I have described in "The Rights and Limits of Theology," and in *Lex Credendi* (under the Second Petition). I assume, with the Fathers, that the revelation given through Christ and His Apostles, apart from any subsequent theological reflection, contained all that was needful for the fullest life of Faith, Hope, and Charity. With them too I hold that the death of the last apostle closed the normative or classical period of Christian inspiration. Not that revelation, which is in some degree a privilege given to every living soul, ceased abruptly; but that all such subsequent revelations need to be tested and tried by their agreement in spirit with the normative apostolic revelation. Their relation to it is that of the work of the disciples of a school of painting to the work of its founder and master. To call them "developments" in the sense of scientific or theological developments is somewhat confusing and misleading: "the disciple is not greater than his Master." Seeing that revelation is not a work of deliberate understanding and judgment, but the inspired, spontaneous, and natural self-expression of the Divine Spirit in man, we have no right to look for any kind of development of Revelation that would neces-

sarily set the Past at a disadvantage with the Present or Future. The development of man's spirit is properly and immediately a development of his understanding and judgment. His instincts, his passions, his affections, his love of Truth, of Goodness, of Beauty, his love of God and man, are more or less constant in their varieties and irregular distribution. They may become progressively better instructed, better directed, owing to the development of his understanding; but as forces they do not develop. If anything, they have been stronger under barbarism and weaker under culture. Their refinement has often been at the cost of their vigour. It cannot be pretended that moral and religious heroism have gone hand in hand with ethical and theological progress. The gain of such progress has been to direct and school, but not to augment, these spiritual forces. We know more theology than S. Peter or S. Mary Magdalene or S. Paul; but do we believe more or hope more or love more? Does the Church produce a more full-blown and abundant sanctity to-day than formerly? Yet if there is no development of hope and charity why should there be a development of faith? If there is no progress in supernatural life, what need of a progress in supernatural light? For this reason I find no difficulty whatever in accepting literal (not merely implicit) apostolicity, in the patristic sense, as the criterion of faith, and cannot but regret that confusion of revelation with theology which seems to allow of a "development" of the "deposit of faith." The "substantial" identity of the boy and the man, of the acorn and the oak, does not get over the fact that the man is more than the boy and the oak more than the acorn; and that a

developed revelation is a further and fuller revelation than its germ; just as the physical science of to-day is a fuller science than that of a century ago.

The apostolic revelation is precisely that construction of the supernatural world, and of this world in its supernatural aspect, which is demanded by, and involved in, the Christian life and the Christian spirit. It is itself the inspired and spontaneous creation of that spirit; no deliberate work of understanding, reflection, and inference; but a prophetic vision. Not an intellectual and theological synthesis within the apprehension of a cultured few; but an imaginative presentment within the apprehension of all—*revelasti ea parvulis.* As here the wise have no advantage over the simple, so neither has a later and cultured century over a barbarous and earlier. It is in the light and by the guidance of this prophetic vision that the Christian life is lived. The materials of which it is built up are necessarily borrowed from the mental furniture, the popular beliefs, the images, the theological, scientific, and historical conceptions of the people to whom it was first accorded.

If it be asked, in what the religious truth of such a revelation or prophetic utterance consists, it is plainly in its adequacy as an inspired, yet avowedly symbolic, presentment of the supernatural order of reality; and secondarily, in its consequent efficiency in shaping and directing our spiritual life in harmony with that supernatural order. As regards the materials of which this presentment is constructed—the categories and judgments and conceptions of the contemporary Jewish and Hellenic mind—it is not their several proper values, but their collective illustrative value or truth which

possesses the authority of revelation and demands the response of faith. The ascent of Christ into Heaven, His descent into Hell, present the same image to those who believed in, and to us who do not believe in, the ancient cosmology. The hidden object of faith is the same, and the practical religious consequences are the same. But it is the illustrative and not the proper truth of the cosmological category which is divinely guaranteed. If M. L. thinks otherwise I invite him to say so frankly and to stand by the consequences. For centuries Churchmen held that cosmology to be as closely bound up with revelation as many scholastics now suppose hylomorphism to be. Both in a sense are right; but it is the illustrative and not the proper values that are consecrated or canonised.

To suppose otherwise; to consider the proper values of these conceptions as binding on faith; to build on these proper values a sacred system of theology, philosophy, science, and history would be (and has been) to wrest all these departments of perfectly natural knowledge from the jurisdiction of observation and reason, and to make them not the free servants, but the crippled slaves, of revealed truth.

Of this normative apostolic revelation, this prophetic vision of the Kingdom of God, the Church is, according to Catholic teaching, the divinely assisted guardian. *Depositum custodi* is the substance and the limit of her teaching-office and authority. Her work is to perpetuate, unchanged, in the consciousness of all generations, that same revealed construction of the supernatural order by which the faith, hope, and charity of the apostolic age was determined and characterised. Her work of

guardianship is also necessarily a work of interpretation. For although much of the pure imagery of which the apostolic revelation is woven must be the same for all men at all times, yet many of the categories, conceptions, and judgments belonged only to the time and place of its origin—nay, even some of the connotations of its images (Fatherhood, Sonship, Kingship, etc.) are as variable as man's social institutions.

From this it follows that a merely literal tradition of that revelation would be surely misinterpreted by minds dominated by other philosophical, scientific, and historical systems than those of the apostolic age; that it would give them a somewhat different construction of the supernatural order, a different impression, a different spirit, a different guidance. Against these corruptions and variations it is for the Church to preserve unity of spirit,—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"; and this she does by denying or modifying those elements of current philosophic or scientific or historical belief which, rightly or wrongly, lead to the misconstruction and misinterpretation of the *depositum fidei* and threaten the unity and pure apostolicity of the Christian Faith.

Has she, then, a special charisma of philosophical and scientific intuition? Does she proceed by the historico-critical method to reconstruct the apostolic mentality? Have Catholics the unspeakable advantage over other thinkers and searchers of a supernatural short-cut to certainty in matters otherwise accessible only to observation and reason? History scarcely bears out such a supposition. For instead of a miraculous acceleration of scientific advance, what we have to explain is that, in its

conflicts with natural reason, dogmatic authority has not merely occasionally, but almost invariably—as it were infallibly—been in the wrong as far as the "proper value" of its philosophic or scientific utterances is concerned. For this I need only refer to the cumulative argument furnished by the documentary evidence collected in such books as Dr. Andrew White's *Warfare of Science with Theology*.[1]

It is impossible, then, to accept so low a conception of the Church's authority as this which represents her as wrangling with reason on its own ground and coming out of the conflict dishonoured and defeated. Her mission, like that of her Master, is not to the wise and prudent, but to the little ones, and her methods are no less naïve and simple. He who has forbidden her the sword of physical violence has surely not entrusted her with the no less fleshly weapons of mental subtlety or philosophical acumen: "non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ." Her mission is prophetic and her method is prophetic. It is by the Spirit that she interprets the Spirit—not by argumentation, but by a divine instinct or tact. It is this spiritual instinct that bids her hold out, with a certain blindness and "unreasonable" obstinacy, against any assertion of reason so long as, and so far as, it imperils, or seems to imperil, the sense and the spirit of the apostolic revelation. Her utterances are prophetic, and must be interpreted prophetically, and not necessarily according to their surface and proper value. They are divine oracles. As such, their sense is more or less cryptic and enigmatic. To treat them as miraculous "theologoumena" is to

[1] Appleton, New York.

degrade them to the plane of reason. Their prophetic value or meaning is not that of a new revelation, but that of the apostolic revelation which they are designed to protect. It is a protective value. *Depositum custodi*—that is the Church's commission. The truth or meaning which they commend to our faith is not a truth of philosophy, or theology, or any other human science, but that of the Divine Revelation which they protect and implicitly reassert. If we are told that the sun moves round the earth, we must remember that we are dealing not with an astronomical but with a prophetic and Scriptural utterance, that the meaning of such an utterance in dogma, as in Scripture, is rarely the surface meaning, but must often wait on time for its disclosure; that it has been dictated by some obscure religious instinct or interest not usually fully self-conscious, such (*e.g.*) as a belief in the inspiration of Scripture.

When, therefore, M. L. says: "Nous adhérerons aux propositions que l'Eglise formule dans la mesure où elle le demande et dans le sens qu'elle leur donne," the rule he lays down is not so simple as he supposes. Were it so, it would be hard to explain that all-but invariable conflict between dogma and reason which, in the right view of the matter, is neither surprising nor scandalous, but which would be most scandalous if the Church claimed infallibility in the field of science, and bound our faith not merely to the "protective" but to the "proper" significance of her dogmatic utterances.

Does it follow from all this that I think as lightly of œcumenical decisions as of the conclusions of unauthorised theological speculation; that, even when the Church adopts such conclusions and lends them the

authority of her magisterium, they remain for me theology and nothing more? This is what M. L. charges me with.

Let me remind him that according to his own school the theological reasonings on which a Council bases its dogmatic conclusions are not the cause of, and do not participate in, the infallibility of that conclusion; that were all the said reasoning invalidated, it would not lessen the authority of the decision in any degree. What does this mean except that it is not in the name of theology, or on the strength of theology, that this conclusion is authorised; that when thus adopted by the Church it is imposed on our faith not as a theological, but as an oracular and prophetic pronouncement. Were we bound to its theological as well as to its protective value, we should be no less bound to all its implicit and necessary theological premisses. We are not then allowed to treat such dogmas as infallible theology, or to regard the Church of Christ as an infallible theologian. Like her Master and His apostles she teaches through the Spirit and not through reasoning, theological or otherwise; or, rather, she guards and protects what they have already taught.

It is clear that many largely obsolete categories of Jewish and Hellenic thought, which are woven into the prophetic presentment of the supernatural order given us in the apostolic revelation, have been thereby consecrated and canonised, and retained for ever their illustrative, though not their proper, value and significance. So, too, those categories, theological or otherwise, in which from time to time the Church has couched her dogmatic decisions, are canonised and

consecrated, and retain for ever their protective, though not necessarily their proper, value, be it philosophical, theological, or scientific. These dogmas are for ever true as to their deepest sense. They are true with the truth of that revelation which they reassert and protect, but to which they do not and cannot add.

Again, as many terms and conceptions of the apostolic revelation were liable to be misconstrued by minds of a different period and culture, and needed the protective interpretations of the Church, so these same interpretations, being adapted to a certain mentality, needed in their turn the protection of subsequent decisions, lest for a later mentality they might pervert rather than protect the sense of primitive revelation. Taken all together, not according to their proper values, but to their protective and prophetic values, they give us, not a dialectically developed body of theological truth, but a more or less accidental congeries of defensive propositions, whose religious truth is in every case the reasserted truth of the revelation which they protect. To look on the whole series of the Church's dogmatic decisions as governed by any sort of law of growth or development, is to suppose that heresies arise in some necessary logical order. We might as well look for such order in the successive repairs and patches and buttresses of an ancient citadel assailed at sundry times and in diverse manners, now from this side, now from that. After-thought may classify these protective measures for convenience, as far as they will admit of classification. But even the most superficial examination of our creeds in the light of history shows lacunæ and irregularities quite inconsistent with an orderly

logical or organic development. Each dogma records a battle or a storm. It stands as a bulwark erected by Faith in the defence of Revelation. But not only is their religious truth, *i.e.* their revealed implication, binding on the faith of all ages; but their "proper" and explicit meaning for the thought of their time has a doctrinal value for other generations with other fashions of thought. Were our age, by its ignorance of the history of thought, incapable of understanding the mentality (philosophic, scientific, and historic) of the apostolic age; were we to read the New Testament crudely in the light of our modern mind, we should certainly understand it amiss in many substantial points. But by means of criticism we can overcome this difficulty. Similarly, for the instructed theologian, the dogmatic utterances of past ages possess a value which they cannot possess for the uninstructed in whose behalf new utterances are needed from time to time. Through them he can learn the identity of the Christian revelation and spirit under all varieties of their practical and speculative expression; he can study the nature of their unchanging substance manifested through its actions and reactions in an endless multitude of combinations. These utterances are monuments marking the Church's progress through the centuries, from which monuments he may decipher the unchanging unity of that revelation to which they bear indirect witness.

If, however, it is now evident that M. L. has unintentionally travestied my meaning, and implied that œcumenical decisions mean as little to me as theological conclusions do, yet it cannot be denied that my interpretation of their value is very different from his.

I might urge that such a theological restatement of the value of ecclesiastical dogmas is not more revolutionary than the restatement of the value of Scriptural utterances which is slowly being forced on theologians; that in both cases it is simply a yielding to the pressure of the accumulating evidence by which Divine Providence forces such a restatement upon us; that what the Fathers and Doctors of the past have said as to the literal and surface interpretation of dogma is as nothing to what they have said about the literal and surface interpretation of Scripture; that in neither case is there any need of a "new theology," but only of a more exact, pure, and careful statement of the same truth which the older theology uttered less purely and exactly according to the only categories then at its disposal.

This conception of the whole body of ecclesiastical dogmas as a protective husk wrapped round the kernel of apostolic revelation is eminently patristic; far more so than the view which regards that revelation as a rudimentary theology which the Church has developed dialectically by applications and explications—thus making the husk continuous with the kernel and of like texture. Nor is it only the dogmatic utterances of the Church, but the entire ecclesiastical apparatus of institutions and customs which go to constitute this protective envelope. Harnack is unfortunate both in his admission and in his metaphor, when he allows that the Gospel could not have survived save for the protecting husk of ecclesiastical dogmas and institutions. That we do not eat the husk does not prove that it is worthless, since without it we could not have the kernel. Kernel and husk alike are the output of one and the same vital

principle. Just because ecclesiasticism is necessary for the protection of the Gospel, it is evidently the creation of the same spirit: "Qui vult finem, vult et media ad finem."

Whatever be the fault of my interpretation of the value of ecclesiastical dogma it has at least the merit of making peace between faith and reason by so putting the realms of authority and science on different planes as to render collision impossible, and of thus ending a secular conflict which has been a source of infinite scandal and has no better basis than an imperfect criticism of principles. To pretend that this synthesis is complete or wholly satisfactory would be to condemn it as unworthy of serious consideration. There is no final truth in such complex matters; only a truth of tendency and direction. Still when M. L. (p. 442) complains of the incompleteness of my system I cannot but think it is due to his scholastic eagerness to classify me as a Fideist or a Newmanist or a Liberal Catholic, and so to lighten his critical task by ascribing to me all the usual opinions of my supposed school or party. Had he studied me in my isolation and individuality I think he might have failed to classify me in the end, but he might also have discovered a unity in my thought which his partisan prepossessions have caused him to miss. Liberal Catholics are not cast in one mould like seminary students; nor are all admirers of Newman or Loisy sworn to a servile imitation of their views. I am in some respects much more old-fashioned than either, in other respects much more new-fashioned.

But since M. L. undoubtedly holds the simpler view of

a divinely revealed rudimentary theology developed by an infallible ecclesiastical dialectic, I feel I have a right to point out one or two of the many difficulties which have driven me from that very much more comfortable position to which I entreat M. L. to restore me if he possibly can. And since he finds fault with my interpretation of the Creed of S. Athanasius, I propose to put before him some of the difficulties I experience in accepting his interpretation of it. Besides, in so doing, I shall confine myself to the question of the value of *theological* categories used in dogmatic utterances, since it is mainly about theology and not about other sciences that the controversy between us becomes acute. Undoubtedly there is no difference of principle between the dogmatic valuation of theological and of astronomical or biological concepts and propositions. Like any science, theology (as distinct from the revelation which is its subject-matter) belongs to the jurisdiction of observation and reflection, and is a matter not of faith but of understanding. Yet because (albeit on the plane of natural reason) it deals with God, its liberation from the jurisdiction of revelation is felt to be more perilous than that growing liberation of other sciences which, if not granted by M. L.'s school of thought, is at least not too vehemently denied. There is a disposition not to press the purely natural scientific implications of dogma and revelation too imprudently in these evil times; but when it comes to the categories of religious or moral philosophy, such compliance is not possible for those who view revelation as a supernaturally communicated theological science rather than as a prophetic presentment of the realities of time and eternity.

M. L., then, censures me for saying that the object proposed to our faith in the Athanasian Creed is not the theological analysis or translation of the apostolic revelation, but is that revelation itself. He will not be content to allow to that analysis a merely protective value for a certain mentality of the past, and a present and eternal witness-value as to the unity of faith amid the variety of its theological reactions. He holds, not merely as I do, that the mental categories used in the expression of revelation and dogma are sacrosanct and not to be tampered with; but also, that they are divinely guaranteed as scientifically valid and final; that they constitute a revealed philosophy, a criterion of valid reasoning, sovereign (directly or indirectly) over the whole realm of human thought. He holds that: "The Word was made Flesh" binds both our faith and our reason to the "Logos" category of Philo together with all its inevitable philosophical implications;[1] —that Transubstantiation binds both our faith and our reason to the scholastic categories of Substance and

[1] This position may be best illustrated by its opposite. "The evangelist is seeking to express ideas essentially religious under metaphysical categories which were in this matter inadequate to his purpose. . . . It was a form borrowed from the time, and the vital teaching of the Gospel can be disengaged from it." (E. F. Scott, M.A., *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 367. Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1906.) Here I would add that, thanks to the difference of form, new aspects and bearings of the underlying truth are revealed which could not be revealed through the synoptic form; that if the substance revealed is the same it is seen differently through different *media*. (Cf. p. 319, *ibid.*) "We can recognise that under the categories of an alien philosophy John is striving to set forth the facts of a profound religious experience. . . . He was conscious of a living fellowship with Christ, which had meant life and peace and illumination to him; and assurance was given to him that in this fellowship with Christ he had entered into communion with God Himself."

Accident together with all their inevitable philosophical implications, that he who denies these categories and their implications: "shall without doubt perish everlastingly." Of course M. L. makes allowance for those *idiotæ* who, through invincible ignorance and theological incapacity, "know not the law," and are thereby shut out from the plenitude of faith and spiritual enlightenment. But he plainly means that there is a large class of educated people, including theologians, who, unless they submit their philosophical reason to be shaped and governed by these Alexandrine and Scholastic categories, will, without doubt, perish everlastingly. Having had much the same theological advantages as M. L. I cannot plead the invincible ignorance of the "idiotæ." "What, then," I ask myself somewhat nervously, "are my chances of salvation if M. L. is right?"

The Platonic and Alexandrine[1] categories of the Athanasian Creed—Person, Nature, Substance, Unity, Conversion, Assumption—though akin to, are not quite identical with those of Scholasticism with which I am familiar; and here at once there is danger of some intellectual confusion that may imperil my salvation. I may understand in a Scholastic sense what is meant in an Alexandrine sense. M. L. says: "Respectueux de tout le magistère de l'Eglise, nous adhérerons aux propositions qu'il formule, dans la mesure où il le demande, et dans le sens qu'il leur donne . . . nous réciterons sans hésitation le symbole de Saint Athanase." I confess I am too conscious of my ignorance and of the dimness

[1] I do not pretend to decide the question as to the Eastern or Western origin of the Creed. In either case its categories are pre-scholastic and more or less Alexandrine.

of my metaphysical intuitions to share M. L.'s cheerful confidence and inhesitancy. I might assent to many of the clauses of this Creed with a blind "foi de charbonnier," but I could never be sure that I had gripped their exact meaning. Yet I am told this *fides implicita* is not enough for a theologian; that I must get my brain right, as well as my heart. I have a hazy idea that this Creed was called into existence by certain old-world controversies about Substance and Person that hung largely on the ambiguity of the term *ousia*, which stood sometimes for the "substantia prima," sometimes for the "substantia secunda" of the Aristotelian categories. Unless I know all this controversy to my fingers' ends, which I do not, I may easily misread the Creed with my scholastic spectacles—to my eternal ruin.

Yet even if I am allowed to interpret the Creed in a scholastic sense, I am not much better off. I know that, as regards the category of natural human personality, Thomists, Scotists, Suarezians, etc., are at daggers drawn, and that it is impossible to assign any fixed content to the category about which they will agree. They only agree in repudiating just the one meaning which personality conveys to modern ears—*i.e.* a unit of will and intelligence. Tell any educated man in these days that there is but one person in Christ, and you make him a Monophysite or Monothelite. Tell him there are two wills and two minds in Christ, and you make him a Nestorian. Tell him there are three perons in God, and he will suppose three wills. Tell him there is but one will, he will suppose one person. To cure him of his Tritheism or his Unitarianism you will have to tell him that in theology personality does not mean

what it means elsewhere; that theologians are not yet agreed as to what it does mean; but that whatever it means in the human order, it means something far less definable and merely analogous in the Divine order. Is there not some danger of the cure being worse than the disease, and leading to a lapse into pantheism or atheism through the denial of any mental content whatever answering to the term "person"?

For such a modernised layman perhaps the "foi de charbonnier" may suffice owing to his "invincible ignorance." But since this "implicit faith" on the part of some, supposes an "explicit faith" on the part of others, and since there must be some public to whose mind all this dogmatic instruction is addressed, what about theologians like M. L. and myself? Are not we at least bound to assent to some clear and definite mental judgment corresponding to the propositions of the Creed? M. L. will say so. Yet I am afraid that, whereas for the aforesaid layman, who "adheres without hesitation" to them, the propositions mean something absolutely heretical, for me and for M. L., in the measure that we are trained scholastic theologians, they mean either nothing at all, or something so vague and indefinite that we could never be certain of anything beyond a mere verbal agreement with those who compiled the Creed. In other words, if its theological categories and judgments be matter of faith, then our faith too is merely a "foi de charbonnier"—faith in the faith of others; and, since this is not enough for us theologians, we "shall without doubt perish everlastingly." Not because we deny what is true, or affirm what is false, but because in the absence of any presentable mental con-

cepts we have not the materials for a judgment one way or the other. So much for the difficulties connected with the idea of personality. Passing over those that spring from the less familiar and more abstract idea of substance or nature, let me turn to those relative to the eternal generation of the Son by the Father without any co-principle of conception and parturition. On the face of it, the mental equivalent of these words is not easily representable. What sort of "fatherhood" is that which does not postulate a correlative "motherhood"? Who can attach meaning to reproduction by way of "generation" alone without any corresponding conception, gestation and parturition? Would not an eternal and original parturition of the Son by a Divine Mother symbolise all we believe just as aptly and far more presentably? It is easy to fit words together, but unless we can fit their meanings together we cannot assent; we can only repeat like parrots. Have we even a vague generic idea of this eternal generation, active and passive? But for a theologian a vague generic idea of production or radiation or emanation will not do; "nec factus, nec creatus, sed genitus." He must distinguish "generation" from "creation" and from "making," not merely verbally (like a layman or charbonnier) but mentally by distinct ideas and representations. Moreover, he must have a distinct mental representation of that "procession" of the Holy Spirit which, being from a double principle (the Father and the Son), is, so far, more akin to "generation" and yet it is not generation; and he must see, from the content of his concepts, that the one ought to be, and that the other ought not to be called "generation."

It is well, perhaps, to make my point clear. If by *Filius est genitus; Spiritus est procedens non genitus* I only mean *Filius est X; Spiritus est Y, non X*, my faith is, according to M. L., not that of a theologian, but of a peasant. I must have definite concepts of X and Y and of their distinctness. I must see that Divine Sonship has something in common with human sonship that distinguishes it from creation, from making, and from procession. This cannot be likeness and identity of nature, which belong also to the Holy Spirit; nor is it temporal posteriority, nor dependence, nor community of gender, nor some element of what we understand by the process of active or passive generation. Will M. Lebreton tell me what precise content is left? It is doubly important, as we know nothing of the second person except what is contained in this predicate *genitus*, which leaves us with the proposition, *Genitus est genitus* or *Filius est filius*. There is nothing beyond the content of the predicate whereby even to designate the subject. To all intents and purposes both are proper names, since the *Genitus* is unique and incommunicable. *Petrus est Petrus* has meaning because it implies humanity which we know; but *X is X* has none till *X* is intelligibly determined. If we cannot give content to this X our ignorance is total.

Then the work *proceeds* from its maker; the creature from the Creator, the Son from the Father; but the *procession* of the Spirit is none of these. What is it then? Spiration? *Spiritus est spiratus?* Y is Y? "Breathing" is plainly a metaphor. And man's spirit is created by God, not "breathed" forth, and therefore gives us no analogy; nor do spirits make or

create or beget or expire spirits. Will M. L. tell me what precise content is left to this Y to distinguish it from X? He surely must know, since his salvation depends on it. Revelation is not of words, but of meanings. For myself, till better instructed, I must regard these propositions not as having metaphysical, but merely protective value; as reasserting the prophetic utterance of the Apostolic revelation which presents us with One God and with three Divine Persons—a Father, a Son, a Spirit—utterances that would be contradictory were they metaphysical and not merely prophetical and symbolic; which possess an imaginative and devotional and practical value; which dimly shadow forth a truth that defies definition, yet excludes Unitarianism, Arianism, Tritheism, Sabellianism, and every similar impertinence of metaphysical curiosity. It is not as theological, but as anti-theological, that the Creed has a protective value. It pulverises every attempt at a rationalistic and literal explanation of purely prophetic utterances.

And now it is to theological propositions, built up of concepts like these—vague, shifting, semi-intellectual, semi-imaginative—that M. L. considers himself bound, as a theologian, to yield not merely a verbal and external assent, but an intellectual and internal assent under pain of anathema. Frankly, I cannot believe that either he or I are in such jeopardy of our souls. I think it will be enough if we recite that Creed with perhaps little more intelligence than the educated layman or the uneducated coal-heaver, conscious all the time that our intelligence gives us no spiritual advantage over them, nor makes our Faith other or better than

theirs, nor gives us any fuller measure of that Truth which is revealed to the simple and hidden from the wise and prudent. We can recite it with a clearer consciousness that it is the protective and "revelational" values, and not the proper and theological values, of its propositions that are proposed to our faith. We may more easily than they discern in it, not a monument of "intellectualism," but one of the many bulwarks against the aggressions of intellectualism which the self-protective instinct of Christianity has erected in the face of theologies that would trouble or destroy that Faith of the simple which is the standard of all Faith. We may feel a certain admiring exultation at the defiance upon defiance hurled in the teeth of any reasoning, how plausible soever, which has not yet proved its compatibility with that revealed construction of the supernatural order given to us by the prophetic spirit of the Apostolic age. As a product of the shock between revelation and reason, this Creed may bear witness more readily for us than for them to the unity of faith from age to age under the infinite variety of its reactions, and of its combinations with diverse mentalities. We should as little tolerate any tampering with its consecrated formulas as with the more solemn sacramental rites and ceremonies which bind the ages and nations of Catholicism together and admit the individual of to-day to a participation in the life of the whole Church from the very beginning. We should feel as little sympathy with such crude efforts at "restatement" as with the mendacious "concordism" that works on a coarse mechanical idea of the spiritual unity of the Sacred

Scriptures. We desire to preserve in its integrity every monument of the Church's Past, in the light of which alone we can understand her Present and prepare for her Future. It is just in the interests of this true conservative spirit that we must set our faces against taking the documents of a remote past "unhesitatingly" according to their surface sense, and must interpret them cautiously and critically in the light of the particular mentality and need from which they sprang and to which they were addressed. The Christian Revelation is as stable and unprogressive as man's spiritual forces of love, human and divine; "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Theology is as variable as his intelligence and information; to-day different from yesterday; to-morrow from to-day. And yet just because it is so pregnant with life and meaning for us, palpitating as it were with the heart-pulses of the Revelation which it covers and protects, this Creed may well be a source of puzzlement and confusion, not to the illiterate *charbonnier*, but to the educated layman, who is apt to receive it "unhesitatingly" as theology rather than as protective dogma; and therefore we shall be glad that, unlike the Anglican Church, the Church of Rome has practically reserved it for clerical use.

What I have said of the Alexandrine categories of the Athanasian Creed applies equally to the Scholastic categories of later dogmatic decisions; nay, to those earlier categories in which "revelational" and not merely "protective" values have been conveyed to us—to the diversified theological categories of the Pentateuch, of the Psalms and the Prophets, of the

Hellenised Old Testament writings, of the Synoptics, of the Pauline and Johannine documents. Surely M. L. will not deny that these, together with the various theological categories of the Christian ages, belong to perfectly irreconcilable thought-systems! Surely he will not pretend that they can be united in one and the same metaphysic to be imposed on our faith as the revealed Word of God! Will he maintain that the metaphysic latent in Genesis III is the same as that latent in John I? Or to take a more congenial instance, will he maintain that the same psychology underlies the definition of the Council of Vienne which declares that man's soul is the "form" of his body, and the clause of the Athanasian Creed: "As the reasonable soul and the human flesh are one man; so God and man are one Christ"? Does he not know quite well that, for Alexandrine thought, body and soul were two complete substances, and not *matter* and *form*, co-principles of one single substance? Is it not plain that to reconcile these pronouncements we must look to their illustrative and protective values, and not to their proper values; to their bearing on the Apostolic Revelation; not to their bearing on purely intellectual problems?

I own to a little surprise that in what professes to be a critique of my whole theological position, M. L. shows no acquaintance with the later articles which I published in *The Month* on the subject in question—*e.g.* with "Mysteries, a Necessity of Life"; still more with "Semper Eadem," which caused a certain flutter in Jesuit dove-cotes and eventually brought my connection with that sedate periodical to an end. In that article I ventured to present M. L.'s view clearly and

distinctly with all its consequences—the view namely that "deposit of faith," the "form of sound words," in which Apostolic revelation was first given to us, is a rudimentary theology susceptible of strictly dialectical development; that its theological and scientific implications are divinely authorised, not only as illustrative of super-scientific reality, but as principles and criteria of correct reasoning. My intention was to exclude two conceptions of doctrinal development, one of which practically ignores the patristic belief in a definite verbal deposit of faith, the same for all ages and peoples—a norm and criterion of the true Christian spirit and life; while the other treats the same deposit as the first chapter of ecclesiastical theology, and thereby not only admits the quite unpatristic notion of a development of Faith, but brings theology and all science to a standstill by subjecting them to the categories of a particular age and locality. The solution (hinted at in the final paragraphs) lies in the recognition of that generic diversity of prophetic and theological utterance, which forbids the attempt to weld revelation and theology into one system, or to relate them otherwise than as a concrete subject-matter is related to its science.

In that article, which many of M. L.'s confrères applauded with both hands for its exact presentment of their views, I described the "Depositum fidei" in the following terms: "Catholic theology occupies itself about the 'deposit of faith' as its principal object. By this it understands a certain body of divine knowledge revealed supernatually to the Apostles and delivered by them under the form of certain categories, ideas and

images, to the immediate successors. This formulated revelation is the *depositum fidei.* It was not as though the tabernacle doors of the heavens, thrown open to the Apostles, were to remain so for ever. What the Apostles saw, they recorded and formulated. To their followers they transmitted the record; not the privilege of direct vision."

"If the heavens, once opened to the Apostles, remained open to every baptised Christian; if the same revelation, and not merely the record of that revelation, were given to each of us as to them, then we should need no *depositum fidei*, no divinely authorised standard of expression; we should be comparatively indifferent to the efforts of past ages to formulate that vision; they would be to us as men's first savage attempts to formulate Nature—the earlier the worse. But it is rather as though centuries ago men had been struck blind and partially paralysed, and as if our knowledge of Nature depended on what was handed down to us from the date of that calamity. How carefully we should have to treasure up the mental forms of that precious tradition and see that the fluctuations of language did not lead us to misinterpret the experience-values of its original terms! That which is *semper idem*, constantly the same under all developments and accretions, is in the case of Catholic theology a doctrine, a record of an experience gone, never to be repeated. It is all-important to preserve, if not the exact words, yet the exact sense and meaning which the record had for the minds of those to whom it was first delivered by the Apostles; to represent to ourselves just what it represented to them. Thus the ideas, categories, and symbols which con-

stitute this representation are of the very substance of the *depositum fidei;* if there is a contingent and accidental element it must be looked for in the language, in the verbal signs that stand for these ideas."

That is, I think, the patristic and traditional conception of the "Deposit," and as such I hold to it, with M. L., against a certain modern school whose theory of Doctrinal Development is, I believe at root, inconsistent with any such authentic and immutable "form of sound words."

Where I differ from M. L. is in my denying that the theological and scientific categories which constitute the vehicle of revelation or of dogmatical ecclesiastical decisions are binding on our faith *as* theology and science, or otherwise than as vehicles of a higher order of truth. The disastrous consequences of the contrary supposition both for revelation, theology, and science in general I have worked out in the said article, and I here invite M. L. to show either how he proposes to evade these consequences, or how they are not so disastrous as they seem. Let him show either that his view does not fetter our human understanding with a divinely revealed philosophy built up out of irreconcilable categories drawn from all ages and levels of culture; or else let him show that such miraculous guidance in purely intellectual problems has proved in fact, what it should be *a priori*, an immense gain to the cause of general enlightenment; that, thanks to the philosophic and scientific implications of apostolic revelation and ecclesiastical dogma, that cause, far from being hindered, has been furthered in a demonstrably miraculous

manner and degree—that the attempt to solve scientific controversies by an appeal to scripture has been universally successful.

And now let me conclude by insisting here, as so often elsewhere (*Lex Credendi; Rights and Limits of Theology*, etc.), that my quarrel has never been with Theology, but only with what M. L. *calls* Theology, and what I prefer to call by the sectarian name of "Theologism,"[1] since I regard it as the mother and mistress of all heresies from the beginning; as the sword which has hewn Christendom into pieces; as the force which both keeps and drives out of the Church multitudes of the most religious-minded men of our day; as the corrupter at once of revelation and theology; the enemy alike of faith and of reason.

For theology, as for every true science, I have the profoundest respect. Nor by theology do I mean abstract theosophy, or theodicy, or "natural theology"; but the fruit of philosophic reflection on the facts of religious experience, among which facts the Apostolic Revelation is central and normative. Nor do I mean this or that particular system of Christian theology, but any system so long as it preserves its free scientific and critical attitude, and claims no other sort of authority than that of reason. I have the sincerest veneration for the truly theological spirit of my earliest guide, S. Thomas Aquinas, but I have very little for the drilled school of "theologists" who invoke his name, and swear by the letter of his work to the destruction of its spirit.

I will not give the honourable name of theology or

[1] Formed from *Theologia*, as "sophism" from *Sophia*.

science to a hybrid system which, applying logical deduction to the inspired and largely symbolic utterances of prophecy, imposes its conclusions in the name both of revelation and of reason, as binding at once on the conscience and on the understanding; which bullies the mind when it cannot persuade it, and supplements argumentative insufficiency by moral, and even external coercion.

A science which is not absolutely free to criticise its own categories and assumptions, and to revolutionise itself in the light of wider experience and deeper reflection; a science whose conclusions are from time to time nailed down to the counter by divine authority as final and above criticism, is no science at all. Yet such must be the issue, if we are bound not merely to the protective, but to the theological and scientific implications of dogmatic decisions; and if the field of free inquiry is thus progressively narrowed with every new doctrinal decree, and the breach between Catholic and non-Catholic enlightenment progressively widened.

Every wise man acknowledges the intellectual value of the consensus of experts in theology as in any other science. He would be a rash fool who took no heed of it, or who departed from it before he had explained its existence and got outside of it. But then it is just the perfect spontaneity and independence of such concordant judgments that creates a presumption that the concord is founded in the nature of things, or in the nature of mind. I cannot, then, attach any more evidential significance to the consensus of our "theologists," which is engineered from outside by governmental methods, than

to the uniformity of a regiment of soldiers. It is a symptom not of intellectual life, but of death. Does the agreement of all Dominicans against the Jesuit view of Grace, or that of all Jesuits against the Dominican view, possess the slightest evidential significance? And is the agreement of all the ecclesiastical schools, collectively, against non-scholastic theology procured in any other way, or possessed of any greater significance? It only signifies that every movement of the tortured mind on its Procrustean bed is promptly checked and punished; that professors are deposed, preachers silenced, writings suppressed—in the supposed interests of truth, we may at least hope. But to accept the resulting uniformity of doctrine as a significant consensus of theological experts, or to consider it as theology in any proper sense of the term, would be to trifle with language. It is simply dogma from beginning to end; for out of dogma nothing but dogma can come by logical deduction. Grant (what is false) that dogmas are theology, and the result is inevitable. The only difference would be between dogmas which the Church has, and those which she has not yet recognised; but which "theologists" have got ready for her *imprimatur*.

It was not, however, primarily in the interests of theology, but in those of devotion and of the mystical life, that I first took up my pen against "theologism" in the article called "The Relation of Theology to Devotion"—much as the Church herself was first driven into the philosophical arena in the interests of her unphilosophical multitudes, and to save their faith against those who, treating it as a theology, exposed it to the attacks of a γνῶσις, falsely so called. Against

our domestic Gnostics I wished to strike once more the warning note struck by à Kempis against scholasticism in its earlier and far purer days, ere it had degenerated from theology into "theologism": "What profit is there in lengthy quibbling about hidden things for the ignorance of which we shall not be blamed in the day of judgment? . . . and what have we to do with *genera* and *species?* Oh, if men bestowed as much labour on rooting out vices as they do in raising curious questions, there would not be such evils and scandals among the people, nor such looseness in Religious Houses."

All subsequent reflection has deepened my conviction that the liberation of the tangled interests of faith and reason, and the establishment of helpful relations between them, depend above all on fidelity to the patristic idea of the Apostolic Revelation as the authentic and normative expression of the Spirit of Christ; on the realisation of the essentially prophetic and non-theological character of that more or less imaginative construction of the supernatural order destined to guide the Christian heart; on the recognition that from the nature of things this revelation does not need, and is not susceptible of, development any more than is sanctity; that God our Father; Christ crucified and risen; the Holy Spirit, etc., are identical values for all times and capacities—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever": that the theological and scientific categories woven into the substance of this inspired presentment are divinely sanctioned, not as theological, but only as illustrative values; that this revelation, viewed as experience, is rightly and profitably made the subject-matter of theological reflection, and that such theology, like any other

science, must develop itself freely under no other limitations than those imposed by its subject-matter and the laws of thought: that the Church's teaching-office is simply to guard the Apostolic Revelation identically for all ages and capacities; that consequently her dogmatic decisions possess a protective but not a scientific or philosophical infallibility.

And now since it seems I am so wrong, I ask M. L., in his courtesy and charity, to set me right.

Note.—The following passage from S. Hilary (*De Trinitate*, II, 2) might be commended to M. L.'s reflection: "Compellimur hæreticorum et blasphemantium vitiis *illicita* agere, ardua scandere, ineffabilia loqui, inconcessa præsumere. Et cum sola fide explorari, quæ præcepta sunt, oporteret, adorare scilicet Patrem et venerari cum eo Filium, sancto spiritu abundare, cogimur sermonis nostri humilitatem ad ea, quæ inenarrabilia sunt, extendere, *et in vitium vitio coarctamur alieno;* ut, quæ contineri religione mentium oportuisset, nunc in periculum humani eloquii proferantur."—"We are forced through the fault of heretics and blasphemers to do that which is unlawful; to climb inaccessible heights; to speak what cannot be uttered; to assume what cannot be granted. And whereas we should be content to find out by simple faith what we have to do—namely, to adore the Father, and, together with Him, to honour the Son, and to abound in the Holy Ghost—we are compelled to stretch the littleness of our discourse to the compass of matters unspeakable, and are driven to wrong-doing through the wrong-doing of others; so that what should be treasured in the devout soul is now committed to all the dangers of human language."

CHAPTER XIII

"FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"

THE following essay, published in *Il Rinnovamento*, does not belong directly to the sequence which concludes with the preceding chapter. Yet it bears so nearly on the conception of the Church assumed throughout this volume, that the whole system stands or falls with its main contention. The authority of the collective over the individual mind as being the adequate organ through which truth, whether natural or supernatural, progressively reveals itself, has always been the fundamental assumption of Catholicism—*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* Any interpretation of papal infallibility which finds the organ of Catholic truth in the miraculously guided brain of one man; which renders futile the collective experience and reflection of the whole Church, destroys the very essence of Catholicism in favour of a military dictatorship which is the apotheosis of individualism. To interpret the Church's collective mind is the office of bishops, councils, and popes; as it is the office of a judge, not to make, but to interpret the law. He is below it, not above it. They are witnesses to, not creators of, the Church's faith and practice. They speak *ex cathedra* so far as they say what she says; and in so doing what they say is in-

fallible in the way that she is infallible. For purposes of law, order, and unity, their interpretation of her mind must prevail *in foro externo* over any non-official interpretation. But no man who submits himself to what, rightly or wrongly, he believes to be the Church's mind is a heretic *in foro conscientiæ*, for he submits to that higher informal tribunal from which all formal and official tribunals derive their authority.

I shall, no doubt, be told that the ancient and historical catholicism for which I am here pleading is to-day either extinct or else is realised, if anywhere and in any degree at all, only outside the Roman Communion, whether in the Churches of the East, or in the Established Church of England, or in the old Catholic remnant; that if it lingers on secretly in the Papal Church, it is only as an obstinate survival of an earlier phase of its development, now formally reprobated in principle. I shall be told that in 1870 the principle of official absolutism, after a struggle of two thousand years, was finally victorious in that Church over the antagonist and catholic principle of official responsibility, and that the supremacy which had already passed away from the *orbis terrarum*, first into the hands of the entire clergy, and thence into those of the episcopate, was finally and by logical necessity deposited in the hands of a single bishop; that by a gradual process of self-inflation the "servant of servants" became the ruler of rulers and bishop of bishops in the precise sense repudiated by Gregory the Great as blasphemous and heretical ("temerarium nomen," "superbæ appellationis verbum," "nomen istud blasphemiæ," "hæc stultitia," "hæc levitas"); that beside and over the episcopal

authority in each diocese there was now established a distinct authority called "apostolic," as though, forsooth, every bishop were not as truly an apostle as the Bishop of Rome. I shall be told that the Catholic Church of Rome, as constituted in the beginning, was thus lifted as a pyramid off its basis and poised unstably on its apex, enabling the Bishop of Rome to say in all seriousness and sobriety, *L'Eglise c'est moi!* and that no theory of development could justify from the charge of heresy such a transformation of the catholic system into its diametrical opposite.

It would be idle and insincere to deny the plausibility of such an objection, or the fact that, whether in defiance or in ignorance of history, a strong theological party worked hard, though not successfully, to impose this heresy on the Church through the Vatican Council, and is still working to read this sense into its undoubtedly ambiguous utterances. Absolutism is a practical and speculative simplification of the problem of government that always commends itself to the multitude and its rulers. But considerations of convenience cannot alter the verdict of history, nor the principles on which the Church is built. Catholicism is too complex an idea to be thus put in a nutshell for the benefit of intellectual laziness. The simple feel, the educated know, that it cannot be so easily comprehended as all that. It is to the large intermediate class, to the bourgeoisie of intelligence, that the abstract, unhistorical, nutshell view seems so necessary.

No thoughtful Roman Catholic can for a moment allow that the Vatican Council cut away the very bases of its own power to decree the papal infallibility. It

avowedly claimed no more for Pius IX than Gregory the Great claimed for himself. Given a seeming contradiction between that avowal and certain of its decrees, we must explain the latter into agreement with the more universal and fundamental principle of dogmatic immutability, and deny that they intend to teach the absurdity of a double episcopal jurisdiction in each diocese. An organic whole has "immediate jurisdiction" in and with, but not over and against, every part of the organism. For it is not something distinct from, and super-imposed on, the sum of its parts—as it were, doubling each and all of them. No united and living part or diocese of the Church could ever be opposed to the whole or œcumenical Church as a subject may be opposed to his ruler; since the part in question is a constituent of the whole, and would therefore be ruler, or at least joint-ruler, of itself. The whole Church lives and speaks in each united part. The voice of each diocese is the voice of that immanent whole; and so far as each bishop speaks and witnesses for his diocese, and so far as Peter speaks for the whole Church, the voice of each bishop is also the voice of Peter. Yet there are not two voices, but one voice; not two jurisdictions, but one jurisdiction, with a double aspect and relation—local and œcumenical. The voice of the schismatic bishop ceases to be the voice of Peter. In this sense Gregory might allow the title of "universal" not only to the Pope, but to every bishop ("si enim universalem me papam vestra sanctitas dicit, negat se hoc esse quod me fatetur universum"); but he plainly distrusts the title. If the Vatican decrees meant more than Gregory meant, they would contradict themselves, and

they would contradict catholic tradition. And since this cannot be allowed, neither can it be allowed that the ancient struggle between Cæsarism and Catholicism in the Roman Communion has been, or ever can be, decided in favour of the former. Moreover, since the struggle in question may be the necessary preliminary to that synthesis of liberty and authority which no institution, civil or religious, can yet pretend to have successfully effected, it may be a healthier symptom than a sterile peace due to the undisputed reign of one principle or the other. For, as we have contended all along, the idea of Catholicism does not admit of a smart scholastic definition, but unfolds itself progressively from age to age.

That this essay has been widely reprobated by the defenders of absolutism is natural enough. But one could wish, in the interests of truth, that it had been seriously refuted instead of simply abused. A text from Cyprian or Irenæus is not much use when Cyprian or Irenæus are in question. Nor is it to the purpose to point out that whereas political power comes from God, through the people, to the government, Church-power comes directly from Christ to the episcopate. For, in the first place, this Suarezian view of political power scarcely, if at all, harmonises with the "divine right of kings" assumed by S. Paul and by the Church's liturgical references to the Roman Emperor and by her historical attitude towards kings and rulers. All authority, civil and ecclesiastical, is there assumed to come from God in exactly the same way. In the second place, this essay maintains that all authority, civil and ecclesiastical, comes to rulers and bishops directly from God or

from Christ; but from God or Christ as immanent in the community, according to the teaching of S. Paul and the Gospels. What it repudiates is Deism and the notion of a sort of direct "telegraphic" communication between Heaven and the rulers of Church and State. It therefore merits a more serious refutation than it has yet received. And for that reason I publish it in the interest of truth. For, be it right or wrong, the view is a very general one in these days, thanks precisely to those principles of political government to which Suarez gave such impetus.

I have not built my argument as I might well have done on the results of historico-critical investigations as to the origin and development of the episcopate. However much experts may differ in detail, they are certainly agreed as to the untenableness of the traditional *a priori* reading of the facts. The defenders of that tradition must either disprove or frankly accept the results of critical history. If the latter, they must accommodate their theory of sacerdotal power to the facts which they accept.

* * * * * *

For all who believe in institutional Christianity in any form, the problem of Church-authority, its nature, its extent, its limits, is one that presses more acutely every day, and does not seem to be nearing its solution. It has been rudely solved in the past, sometimes to the utter destruction of individual liberty, sometimes to the practical annihilation of law and order, occasionally by compromises which offered up consistency on the altar of expediency.

There is great mischief in "precipitating things" and

leaping forward to syntheses for which the times are not ready, and of which perhaps some of the essential elements are yet lacking. But it is only by ceaselessly dragging our nets though the waste waters that we may hope at last to enclose what we have sought patiently through so many dark hours of failure. For this reason I am not ashamed to make another grasp at an elusive truth that has so often slipped through my fingers before, and will no doubt do so again. We often get more instruction and edification from the mistakes than from the successes of our neighbours; and my vain endeavours to struggle out of the labyrinth of my difficulties may possibly suggest the right path to some quieter spectator of my struggles. Here, at least (*sc.* in the pages of *Il Rinnovamento*), I shall be indulged with that liberty of making mistakes which is denied me elsewhere, nor need I fear that what is said tentatively will be taken dogmatically.

For the occasion I will use the word "priesthood" widely as the equivalent of all ecclesiastical authority. It is this conception of "priesthood" in its widest sense which I wish to examine, and more particularly that perversion of it known as "sacerdotalism."

The priest is an official who has received power and authority to teach and govern the religious community, and to administer its sacred rites. From whence has he received this power, from Heaven or of men? In one sense, from Heaven and not of men; in another, of men and not from Heaven. And for whom has he received it? Plainly not for himself, not for his own profit or aggrandisement, but for the community. He is the "servant of the servants of God."

"Sacerdotalism" corrupts and perverts this conception of priesthood in two respects. First of all, in the more vulgar and obvious way of regarding the sheep as purely ministerial to the ease and dignity of the shepherd. In this form the perversion is easily detected and universally reprehended. But it lurks more subtly and perniciously in the notion that the whole ecclesiastical apparatus and system is something which exists for its own sake and not merely and purely as an instrument for the spiritual service of those who support it. We do not escape egotism by ministering, however selflessly, to the egotism of the corporation or caste or trade union to which we ourselves belong. There is "sacerdotalism" in forgetting that the Sabbath and the whole Law is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath or for the Law; that the sacraments are for man, and not man for the sacraments; that the priest is for the layman and not the layman for the priest. The "son of man" (*i.e. man*) is lord even of the Sabbath. He who put all things else under his feet and at his service, last of all ordained even the Sabbath for man's rest and refreshment, to be his servant, not his tyrant. Man is therefore master and lord of the Sabbath, the Law, the Church, the Sacraments, the Priesthood. The sacerdotalism which forgets this has, of course, its direct counterpart in the abusive conception of civil and political offices and institutions as being ends in themselves. The human mind is so easily and so absorbingly interested in the mechanism of government that it rarely criticises the machine itself by the supreme criticism of utility and productiveness. Now and then it wakes from its wondering ecstasy to the world of

plain fact, and asks: What, after all said and done, after all this clanking and grinding and spinning of cumbrous wheels, what has become of "the man in the street," of some millions of neglected units for which all this Stately or Churchly apparatus is supposed to exist? In this sense Sacerdotalism is Bureaucracy in the Church; Bureaucracy is Sacerdotalism in the State.

But in the second place, the legitimate idea of priesthood may be perverted by a false conception of the source from which, the channel through which, the priest derives an authority to teach, rule, and minister, which in a true sense is divine and supernatural. However immoral in many of its consequences, this error is not necessarily the fruit of immorality, of the egotism of individuals or corporations, but derives from that more or less pictorial and imaginative way of representing truth which is proper to religion as distinct from philosophy. The immanental aspect of God can never be that of popular religion, which necessarily addresses itself to the imagination, and speaks of things divine in terms of things human and easily visualised. For such a religion, God, the source of all power and authority, stands entirely outside of, and above, the creature. He guides and governs the race and the unit only from without, not also from within. Heaven is His throne, Earth is His footstool. From His dwelling on high He looks down upon the wide world outspread at His feet, and through the ministry of ascending and descending angels He rules as a king over His subjects, a shepherd over his flock, being in no sense identified with that which He rules.

We know how authority is imagined in this scheme,

and how easily the symbol or parable is mistaken for the truth which it symbolises. To the priest or the ruler, as to his delegate or vicegerent on earth, this external God imparts a measure of His own spirit—a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of power, a spirit in all cases conceived somewhat materialistically and even impersonally. And in virtue of this gift the priest or ruler is raised in spiritual character and quality above his fellows. He is raised to a higher order of being, his official words and actions are spoken and done by God Himself, whose passive instrument he is. As God, so also God's vicegerent stands outside and above the community over which he is set. Officially he is no constituent part of its organisation. It does not act through him, but God through him acts upon it. In a word, he is the delegate of a purely transcendent, not of an also immanent God. The power and authority is, of course, given him not for himself, but for the service of men. Yet, since he derives it not from men, but from Heaven, he is responsible to Heaven and not to men.

As mere symbolism, as a pictorial and imaginative explanation of the source and meaning of authority, all this may be quite harmless, useful, and even necessary. Our sacred scriptures are full of this language and imagery. They show us the heavens opened and the Spirit descending and resting on God's delegates in the form of a dove, or of fiery tongues, or transmitted from soul to soul through bodily contact. Nor has Christian tradition ever departed from these figures and metaphors by which alone the highest truth can enter into the lowliest doors. But squeeze any metaphor hard enough and it will yield poison; in this case the poison of

absolutism and irresponsible government, the poison which constitutes the second objectionable element of "sacerdotalism."

It is possible for the priest to use his power and authority disinterestedly, and solely in the service of the community, and yet to hold himself in no wise responsible to that community for the use of his power; to consider himself the superior of all collectively, and not merely of each singly; to account himself answerable only to an "absentee" transcendent God to whom appeal is impossible; or to an assize for whose sentence we must wait till the dawn of eternity. The existence of men or classes of men who so conceive their authority has been and must always be fraught with mischief and danger for societies whether civil or ecclesiastical. To trace the growth of this conception of religious authority back to its first beginnings almost in apostolic times would be to discover the ultimate fibres of a malignant cancer which has steadily undermined the strength and vigour of Christianity, century after century. That it has not slain Christianity altogether is only because the wheat of truth is more deep-rooted than the tares of error. It is because of that instinctive, unconscious (or sub-conscious) spirit of sane democracy which breathes through the Gospel from beginning to end; which underlies those same inspired figures and images to which absolutism perversely appeals—a spirit which, in the eyes of absolutists, makes the Bible one of the most dangerous books not yet put on the *Index*.

All figurative and metaphorical language is open to perverse interpretation. Hence, when Our Lord speaks of His Kingdom, He has to remind us that it is not of

this world; that His servants are not to take the sword, or fight; and so in other matters. If then the absolutist and the democratic conceptions of authority are irreconcilably opposed, there is no such irreconcilable opposition between the former and the imaginative language in which religion explains the nature and source of authority. Stripped of all imagery, and reduced to its strict philosophical content, this popular view of the matter may be only (as even Suarez seemed to find) an earlier and cruder expression of exactly the same underlying truth; just as the external God of elementary and even mature religious imagination is but another expression of the immanental God of deeper reflection. In our endeavour to interpret the former coherently, we are gradually forced on to the latter as its only conceivable meaning.

It is no longer difficult for us to believe that "no man has seen God at any time"; seen Him, that is, as something external and apart from the world and humanity; or that no man has heard God at any time calling out from the clouds, or from the burning bush, or from the summit of Sinai. We have long since not merely resigned ourselves to a silent and a hidden God, but have come to recognise our seeming loss as a priceless gain. For now we have learnt to seek Him where alone He is to be found, and seen, and heard; near and not far; within and not without; in the very heart of His creation, in the centre of man's spirit; in the life of each; still more, in the life of all. It is from the Sinai of Conscience (individual and collective) that He thunders forth His commandments and judgments; it is from the heights of His holiness that he looks down in pity upon

our earthliness and sinfulness; it is in His Christ, in His Saints and Prophets, that He becomes incarnate and manifest, and that He tabernacles with the children of men.

Along with this sense of the Divine Immanence has grown that of the authority of the general over the individual mind and conscience, as being a relatively more adequate organ and expression of God's truth and God's will; as furnishing a standard from which the individual may not fall short, and which he must first attain before he is competent to criticise and develop it. The fragmentary revelations of Himself which God makes to every mind and heart coalesce in the mind and heart of the community, and form a steadily developing body of traditional beliefs, laws, and customs, through contact with which the individual spirit is wakened, guided, and stimulated. If individual judgments and impulses are liable to the warp and bias of private aims and interests, there is a strong presumption that the consentient mind and will of the community are free from such limitations, and are determined by an end that is more approximately universal and divine, more truly representative of the normal developments of the human spirit.

Yet we must not confound this general spirit, this authoritative mind and will of the community, with its provisional embodiment in certain formulated beliefs, laws, and customs. To give to this latter the honour that belongs to the former would be to imprison the spirit in the letter, and to make progress impossible. The formulation of a living and growing spirit can never be of more than approximate and relative value. It is, at

best, a compromise for purposes of social intercourse and co-operation. Growth and progress demand that under certain conditions the individual may and even must depart from established forms of belief, law, and custom, in obedience to the higher and more ultimate law of the spirit itself. It is a false explanation which makes a certain lawlessness of private will and judgment a condition of advance, as though it were only through disobedience and rebellion that new paths of progress could be discovered. Disobedience is never lawful, but fidelity to the letter may be infidelity to the spirit; obedience to a lower may be disobedience to a higher authority; loyalty to our rulers may be disloyalty to our Church or to our country, in whose interest they rule and for whose sake alone they are to be obeyed. To disregard law, custom, or command solely from self-interested motives is plainly disobedience; it is a sin against society, against the Spirit of God as revealed in the general mind. To disregard it simply for the negative reason that we do not understand its social utility—which is so often proved by a far wider and longer range of experience than lies within the field of individual vision—is an exercise of private judgment in the most objectionable sense. Here a certain "blindness" of obedience is surely to be desired; but when we see, or sincerely think, that such a law or custom is generally hurtful, that its abolition or modification is clearly for the common good, we not only may, but we ought to depart from it in obedience to that highest social law from which all lower laws depend. Thus, among the first women who claimed certain liberties unknown to former generations, but now universally admitted to be

just and beneficial, some may have been merely forward and shameless, but others clearly saw the public mischievousness of the rules and conventions which they were transgressing. It is not to the blamable transgression of the former, but to the blameless and courageous transgression of the latter, that the merit is due.

Analogously, those who depart from current and well-established traditional beliefs solely on the strength of some personal view—which, in such matters can never be quite self-evident—are following private judgment in its bad sense. But when it is clear that a counter-belief is gaining ground in such a way that it represents the "consensus" of the future; when the same conclusion is reached simultaneously and independently by different thinkers, one may, and at times one ought, to follow the belief that lives in the spirit (however small the number of its supporters) rather than that which stagnates in the formula (however vast the multitude of its passive adherents); for in so doing one departs from the dead letter only to conform oneself to a truer, higher, and more authoritative expression of the living spirit.

Thus, it is in the widest, the most enduring, the most independent consensus that we possess the fullest available manifestation of that Divine Spirit, partially and imperfectly manifested in our own individual mind and conscience—the spirit of Truth and Righteousness, the source of all moral power and authority—God revealed in man. Authority, then, is not an external influence streaming down from heaven like a sunbeam through a cleft in the clouds and with a finger of light

singling out God's arbitrarily chosen delegates from the multitude, over and apart from which they are to stand as His vicegerents. Authority is something inherent in, and inalienable from, that multitude itself; it is the moral coerciveness of the Divine Spirit of Truth and Righteousness immanent in the whole, dominant over its several parts and members; it is the imperativeness of the collective conscience.

For us, once freed from our imaginative representation of an external God, who works upon humanity from outside; for us who recognise that the Divine Spirit is to be sought in the human spirit where alone it speaks to us and reveals itself, the question as to whether authority (civil or religious) is from Heaven or of men assumes a new complexion, and needs a new formulation. We should rather ask, whether it is from what is Heavenly in man, or from what is earthly; from the Spirit or from the Flesh; from what (according to the idea of Gamaliel) is true to the law of his spiritual development and therefore permanent; or false to that law and therefore evanescent. This is the philosophy that underlies such religious and imaginative expressions as, "If this counsel or work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it" (Acts v. 37); or, "Every plant that My Father hath not planted shall be uprooted."

If then the community to be governed is a higher organ, a fuller manifestation of the immanent Deity, than any of the laws, councils or rulers, by which it is governed; if God is never to be found by man so truly outside as inside humanity—in conscience, both individual and collective—there is no such thing as an

authority for whose use or abuse its bearer is accountable solely to an absentee external God, and to an indefinitely distant assize. He is accountable, perhaps, to no higher officer or council; he is accountable, in a sense, to God alone; but it is to God immanent in the collective mind and conscience of the community, and to a tribunal whose throne is always set in judgment, whose will, revealed not in words but in events, is always eventually ascertainable.

To say that all spiritual and moral power is inherent in the people and derives from the people, in no wise contradicts the truth that it derives from God and is divine. It is only to insist that, for us, God's highest and fullest manifestation is given, not in the clouds, nor in the stars, but in the spirit of man, and therefore most completely in that completest expression of man's spirit which is obtained in the widest available consensus, and is the fruit of the widest collective experience, of the deepest collective reflection. With the clear recognition of this truth, which gains ground rapidly on all sides, the second element of "sacerdotalism" is robbed of its apparent justification. The priest is not only *for* the people but *from* the people; his baptism is indeed from Heaven, but it is also from men. That it is *from* the Spirit, *through* the community is inevitably implied in the practice of ceremonial ordination. That it is from the Spirit *in* the community is only the rational interpretation of the symbolic and pictorial account of its heavenly origin which religion gives us. It is from Him Who dwells not in temples made with human hands, but in that human temple which His own hands have made. The priest stands above the layman solely

as the representative of the whole organism of the Church of which he and the layman alike are constituent members. From that organism, as from God, all his spiritual powers are derived, and to it, as to God, he is responsible for their use or abuse.

Such seem to me the inevitable results of a more adequate emphasis of the Divine Immanence. Let us now see whether in this, as in so many other matters, reason and revelation, the Gospel of Nature and the Gospel of Grace, are in harmony one with another. In other words, let us try to understand our Lord's attitude towards "sacerdotalism." It makes a great change in that understanding if we frankly accept the truth that He either believed in, or at least accommodated His language to, the current belief in the speedy consummation of the world; that Judaism was His religion; and that what He personally inaugurated was not another religion, but a reformed Judaism; that the earliest Christianity was not a substitute for, but a supplement of that religion, somewhat, within limits, as the earliest Wesleyanism was of the religion of the Church of England: that to His human mind religion implied an institution, with priesthood, hierarchy, ritual, sacrifice, theology, tradition, and all those features which history shows us to be in some form characteristic of all religions, and therefore to be postulated by something in the very nature of man. Since it was not against the reasonable use, but against the anti-spiritual, anti-social abuses of these things He set His face; since He came not to destroy, but to perfect and spiritualise, we cannot say that the subsequent transformation of the Christian movement into a religion of the same universal and

catholic type was in any way counter to the mind of Christ; we cannot say that the very notion of a priesthood is antagonistic to the Gospel.

But that "sacerdotalism" is antagonistic, we can most confidently affirm. This is perfectly obvious as far as sacerdotalism implies that the priesthood, the ecclesiastical officialdom, exists for its own sake and not purely for the service of the people. Here it is notorious that Christ but continued the burden of Ezechiel's rebuke to the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves rather than their flocks; who viewed their own corporation or caste as the more precious and privileged part of the community, as an aristocracy worthy to be supported by the profane laity who "knew not the Law." Against this spirit we have the lifelong example and most explicit teaching of Him Who came (He tells us) not to be ministered to, but to minister—the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep, Whose "good news" was precisely to those "poor" who were so scorned by the ecclesiastical aristocracy, Who was in the midst of His own disciples as one Who serves, Who warned them that the greatest of them must be as the least, and that their serviceableness was the only ground and measure of their greatness. When He inveighs against the theologians, canonists, casuists, and priests, the ground of His indignation is ever the same—this inversion of the right order of means and end, this subjection of Man to the Sabbath, the Law, the Temple —of man, for whose service all these things had been instituted by God. It is needless to develop so familiar a topic. Nothing could be more antagonistic to the spirit of the Gospel than the usage by which in certain

quarters the "Church" has come to be almost a synonym for the clergy.

As to the second and less obtrusively immoral element of "sacerdotalism," it seems to me that it would be an anachronism to look for any explicit recognition of what may be called the democratic conception of authority in the human mind or language of our Lord. Mind and language alike were shaped by the religion to which He belonged; by those imaginative and pictorial presentments of truth contained in the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament. There, as we have seen, God is represented as mainly transcendent, as outside and above the world and humanity, and as communicating a somewhat similar outsideness and superiority to those whom He commissions to be the rulers of Israel, and upon whom He pours down some measure of His Spirit by which they are raised above their fellows to a higher order of being. The underlying and complementary truth of the Divine Immanence, with all its democratic consequences, could scarcely have been grasped or formulated by the mentality to which our Lord addressed Himself, and to which, if He did not actually share it, He certainly accommodated Himself. But vital and eternal truths are *felt* long before it is possible to formulate them in the understanding, or picture them in the imagination. We are swayed and governed by them long before we become conscious of them; and those who yield to their obscure pressure, who trust their own best instincts rather than their clearer and more superficial apprehensions, are never misled by their imperfect and simpler expression of the same truths. If Christ spoke, and had to speak the language

of pure transcendence, His whole life and teaching and spirit implied the truth of immanence.

That He spoke the language of pure transcendence needs no showing. The authority of the shepherd is not inherent in, or derived from his flock. He stands outside and above it, as a being of a superior order. The authority of the Scribes and Pharisees was that which Moses received from God on Mount Sinai. The baptism of John was not of men, but from Heaven. His own Messianic power descended upon him from the clouds in the form of a dove; and upon his apostles in the form of descending tongues of fire.

But that He *felt* the great truth, thus imperfectly figured and symbolised; that it shone out in the practical interpretation which He gave to these symbols and figures, becomes more apparent on closer reflection. It is indicated in his steady condemnation of that peculiar sort of priestly arrogance which is the parasite and index of a sense of power derived not merely from a superhuman, but from an extra-human source; of responsibility to no earthly and accessible tribunal; of a supremacy which knows no rival in the visible and present order of things. "Do not desire to be called Master or Father," he says to His apostles. "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; but be ye not so." "I your Lord and Master wash your feet," He says, insisting, as the context shows, not merely on the service, but on the implied reverence and subjection. For there can be service without subjection, as of parents to their children. It may be no affectation of humility when a Pope calls himself "Servant of the servants of God"; but whether he considers himself

answerable to the servants of God, taken collectively, or considers his authority derived from them—from God as in them—is another matter.

A clearer indication of the same implicit immanentism is found in the assertion that, because the Sabbath is made for man, therefore man is Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not only *for* man, but in some senses *from* man and dependent on man. What we feel at work in and behind such sayings, is the great truth that the good of man is the will of God; that the two causes and interests are identical; that it is precisely in man's spiritual nature and its needs that God speaks to us and proclaims His will, and gives us a supreme law and criterion of all lower laws. It is from this Spirit of God working in the spirit of man that all laws and rulers ultimately derive their authority. By a momentary recognition of this truth the inspired writer of Genesis translates the natural instinct of reproduction into a Divine Command: "Increase and multiply." "Natura exigit, imperat Deus"—what Nature demands, God enjoins—was the principle in the light of which Suarez made such strides towards the democratic conception of authority and its source. Man needs the Sabbath because God wills it; God wills it because man needs it. Man's deepest needs are God's highest and most imperative laws.

Again, in his assertion that the Children of the Kingdom are free in respect to human laws, our Lord implies the sovereign and divine authority of the liberated spirit of man; of reason redeemed by grace; pre-eminently of the collective reason of Christendom, in which that spirit finds its fullest attainable expres-

sion. His Gospel but realises the prophetic dream of a coming day, in which no man should say to his fellow, "Know the Lord"; bringing as it were a message from outside and from afar; but when all should know Him, from the least to the greatest, just because they would learn to find His law written in their hearts by the spirit, and not graven on outward tables of stones at the dictation of a voice from the clouds.

Once more. Who is the judge and the law-giver to whom we are to be accountable at the last? It is God, indeed; but God as present in, and represented by, humanity; as declaring His Will and His Law in the needs and exigencies of human nature. The hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the sinful, these are our judges, these are our law-givers. In them God is immanent; in the cry of their struggling spirit His Law is proclaimed, in their deliverance and salvation His Will is accomplished.

Perhaps it is not too much to suggest that the same idea is implied in the story of the forgiveness of the paralytic man. In the common religious conception of the Jews, forgiveness "descended like the gentle rain from heaven upon the earth beneath"; it was from God alone, from God apart from man. Christ tells us that it is from the Son of Man, from God in man, here upon earth. Every sin, whether classified as against God, our neighbour, or ourself, is in a deep and fundamental sense a sin against Man, against what is divine in humanity. And it is for the offended to forgive. That the offence is both committed against and absolved by the whole community is openly recognised in the General Confession of the Roman Liturgy.

It is surely in accordance with this notion of authority as immanent in, and emanating from, the highest in man that Christ says: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them"; and that He bids a dispute to be referred first to the judgment of two or three witnesses as to a fuller manifestation of the Divine Will; and finally to the whole community as to the highest available manifestation.

I think, then, that though our Lord necessarily spoke about authority in the language of His hearers, there can be little doubt that His Spirit was governed entirely by the truth of which that language was a most inadequate and easily misleading expression; that the real substance of His teaching demanded, and has eventually brought about, a truer and less imperfect way of thinking and speaking of the matter.

When we turn from Christ to Christianity it seems to me that what we find is, at first, a very pronounced democratic sentiment still clothing itself in the dress and unsuitable forms of scriptural thought and expression, and then its gradual decline and extinction owing to the persistence, conservation, and literal interpretation of those same forms; and, finally, a revolt against the extreme logical, and profoundly anti-Christian, consequences of such misinterpretation, and the explicit recognition and more adequate expression of the immanence of Divine Authority in the human spirit, in conscience both individual and collective.

In its first amorphous state, as a brotherhood of saints preparing for a near Advent, the Christian body was bound together by no other tie than that of one and

the same indwelling Spirit of Christ, imparting gifts in various kinds and measures to each for the edification of all. Its sole hierarchy was one of charismata and graces. Office and competence went hand in hand. When any member of the organism might be filled with the indwelling spirit; when none was wholly ungifted or without office; when the individual was subject to the judgment and approval of the group, and the lesser group to that of the larger, there was no place for the sacerdotalist conception of irresponsible authority derived from a source outside and not in the community. Christ was the source; but Christ was immanent, not absent. He was with every two or three. He was with His Church always, even to the end of the world.

Later, when it was necessary for the Christian movement (one might almost say the Christian "revival") to form itself into a permanent religion, with all those institutional features without which it seems no religion can battle with and conquer the world to any great extent, its organised hierarchy of officials was still conceived, not only as instrumental to the general good, but as authorised by, and answerable to, the whole body of the faithful taken collectively, both lay and cleric. Its function was just to mediate between the more and the less spiritually gifted levels in the community, to secure the communising of those richer graces and powers which were given to the few for the help and edification of all. The Spirit, in whose name they ruled, and ministered and taught and baptised and consecrated, was still viewed as immanent in the whole body, as audible in the collective voice.

The very process by which, under the influence of the

imperial conception of authority, and of that current in the religions which Christianity overcame through a policy of assimilation, the democratic nature of the Christian priesthood was gradually forgotten, is fairly well known. The language and imagery of sacred scripture and inspired history lent themselves readily enough to such a perversion.

As soon as the bishop came to take the shepherd metaphor quite literally; to regard himself not as representing and "recapitulating" his flock; nor as drawing his power and authority from the Holy Ghost immanent in the flock, he could no longer consider himself as answerable to the body of whose organism he formed no part, and which he ruled as an outsider with a commission from afar.

If he subjected himself to the collective episcopate, such a council was bound in its turn to consider itself not as the organic head, in which the whole Church and the spirit pervading it became self-conscious and vocal, but as ruling the passive Church from outside, as a shepherd rules his flock (from which he differs in species), in virtue of powers, whether derived directly from an external heaven or through the mediation of a monarchic, universal bishop matters not one whit. Against the Pope, the Council of Bâle had no logical standing so far as it regarded itself as responsible not to a living, accessible tribunal, not to the Holy Ghost immanent in the Church, but only to the Holy Ghost in Heaven, to an inaccessible tribunal to whom the subject Church might appeal in vain. As to who is the repository of such irresponsible power it matters but little. The vital question is, Where is that God to Whom alone

both Pope and Council claim to be responsible? Is He immanent in the whole Church where we can ultimately learn His mind and will; or is He away beyond the stars where we can know nothing of either, save what the episcopate is given to know by some mysterious intuition? By what vehicle does He speak and communicate with us? By voices from the clouds or by the gradual evolution of His Mind and Will in the collective spirit of mankind?

It may be denied that there is any institutional tribunal by which the laws and formulas of Pope or Council (whichever be held supreme) can be revised; that there is any formal appeal to the general vote of the faithful on which the validity of such decisions depends. But, above the constitutional headship, there is the preconstitutional, which is a necessary fact and not a doctrine. It cannot be denied that in the life of that formless Church which underlies the hierarchic organisation, God's Spirit exercises a silent but sovereign criticism; that His resistlessly effectual judgment is made known, not in the precise language of definition and decree, but in the slow manifestation of practical results; in the survival of what has proved itself life-giving; in the decay and oblivion of all whose value was but relative and temporary.

The path of the Church's progress is simply littered with the bleached bones of long-forgotten decisions and decrees which, in their day, were reverenced as immortal.

One thing, at least, is certain, that democracy has come to stay; that to the generations of the near future any other conception of authority will be simply unthinkable; that if the authority of Popes, Councils,

and Bishops cannot be reinterpreted in that sense, it is as irrevocably doomed as the theologies of man's childhood. The receptivity of the general mind is a fact that priesthoods have to reckon with, and always do reckon with in the long run. They cease to say, nay, they cease to believe that to which the general ear has become permanently deaf. They would fain seem to lead, but, in fact, they follow the spirit in its developments; for it is there, and there only, that truth is worked out. To command Nature, man must obey it; to command the general mind, priesthoods must obey it. If they assail it, if they fling themselves against that rock, they, and not it, shall be bruised; if it turn against them and fall upon them, it shall grind them to powder. Already, as might be expected in that quarter, the mind of the American Roman Catholic is becoming blind and impervious to the interpretation of authority current among the traditional theologians of his Church. Saturated with the democratic principle, he tends irresistibly to invert the hierarchical pyramid carefully balanced on the Pope as its apex, and to set it firmly on its base again; to represent it as built up from the earth, not as fallen headforemost from the skies. It is this utter decay of the ancient categories of Absolutism that lies at the root of what is condemned at Rome as Americanism. So too the instinctive, and not groundless, dread of lay intervention which is the precise and essential cause of Rome's present opposition to the Christian-Democrat movement in Italy, or to the Worship-Associations in France—a dread which is formulated in all good faith as zeal for the hierarchic dignity—is another sign that the conflict between the two

conceptions of authority is becoming acute. Naturally, it is felt most keenly in that communion where the absolutist conception has been worked out most continuously and ruthlessly, and revealed in all its bearings; but it is felt proportionally in every communion of the Catholic type. There is an uneasy suspicion abroad that if in the military stage of our civilisation the Church could assert herself and prevail only by means of a military polity and a military interpretation of her Divine authority, in these days her success depends on an abandonment of both. If a religion is to influence and leaven our civilisation and culture it must be recognised as a part of it, as organically one with it; not as a foreign body thrust down into it from above, but as having grown up with it from the same root in the spirit of humanity. Our forefathers too believed that civilisation and religion had but one source; that both came from God who taught man the use of speech, who instituted marriage and government, who dictated the laws of family and social life. Hence they knew nothing of that fatal discord which arises when religion is derived from outside and civilisation from inside. To their belief we must return in a better form, and derive both one and the other from God, but from God immanent in the spirit of man. Else we must expect to witness a steady advance of that alienation of the laity from the Church, of which there are manifest signs all round us. To retain them or to win them back we must restore them to their original active participation in the Church's life of which they have been deprived by the gradual prevalence of the absolutist over the democratic interpretation of priestly authority.

Need I waste a paragraph to explain that by democracy I do not mean the subjection of the clergy to the laity; of the few to the many; but of clergy and laity alike to the whole body which exists logically prior to any such division; to that formless Church, to whose service the hierarchic institution is but instrumental, from which its authority is derived, to which it is responsible, by which it is reformable. That body of the Holy Ghost, which underlies and gives life to the superimposed ecclesiastical organisation it has evolved for itself, has ever retained its own charismatic hierarchy of gifts and graces; its royal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek to which the official priesthood is related as a sacrament to its substance, or as the material and temporal to the spiritual and eternal. To this aboriginal Church, to this Christian demos, clergy and laity alike are subject and answerable. Its voice is not heard in the streets, its will and judgment are not formulated, but sooner or later they prevail, and all that is framed against them comes to naught. Say what they will, bishops, popes, and councils await its verdict, and await it trembling.

We do not then want to laicise the Church, but only to recognise the participation of the laity in that sovereign priesthood and authority from which those of the official hierarchy are derived.

He may expect to be laughed to scorn who suggests that the spirit of democracy in the Catholic communions is not dead, but only slumbering. And he would perhaps merit ridicule who placed his hope in any cession of their claims on the part of priesthoods. It is said reforms must come from below. Let us rather say they

must come from above, from God immanent in the entire community which stands above both priesthood and laity. To trust in that is to trust in God, in nature, in the spirit, in the irresistible force of truth and right. There is no need of violent revolution, but only of a quiet, steady re-reading and re-interpretation of existing institutions. For what we have to combat has come about by a like noiseless process of misinterpretation. We need not destroy or even invert the hierarchical pyramid; we need only regard it from above instead of from below. Abundant traces still remain of the primitive view of the priesthood and its powers, and these traces we must deepen and follow up and insist on. The deviation was not wilfully planned, and so the footsteps of the past were not carefully obliterated, but remain for our guidance, involuntary witnesses of the truth. These vestiges are, for the sacerdotalist theology of to-day, so many anomalies to be explained away by an ingenuity that takes account of everything but history. How is it that in the Roman liturgy the people collectively absolve the priest in exactly the same terms as those in which the priest absolves the people? How is it that in response to the "Dominus vobiscum," which it is now only lawful for priests to utter, the congregation answers: "Et cum spiritu tuo"? How comes the priest to say: "Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice *and yours* be acceptable before God"; and what means the "us" and "we" which pervade the Canon of the Mass from beginning to end? How comes it that baptism, the greatest of all the sacraments, can be validly ministered by a layman or woman, or even by an infidel; or that the ministers of the sacrament of

marriage are the contracting parties? To solve these and a hundred similar problems on sacerdotalist lines is to do violence to history and to common sense. Collectively they furnish an irresistible cumulative argument in favour of the original conception of the hierarchy as being simply representative of the entire Church in whose bosom the plenitude of all spiritual power and authority resides. In her minister, however designated or set apart, it is the Church herself, it is Christ and the Spirit of Christ immanent in the whole body, Who baptises and absolves, and consecrates and anoints, and teaches and rules.

We hold the clue, then, in our hands. What is needed is a steady, persevering work of re-interpretation, of study, enlightenment, and instruction. It must needs be that error should arise, and spread, and work out its own disproof in order that Truth be made manifest, our minds being so constituted that we know nothing fully till we know its opposite. When we return to the abandoned Truth we return to it in a new and better form, and with a deepened appreciation of its value. So it is that we may hope to return to the profoundly Christian and Catholic conception of the democratic character of all authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and of "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free."

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